DETROIT METRO TIMES
JANUARY x – FEBRUARY 3, 2026

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VOL. 46 | NO. 7 | JANUARY 21-FEBRUARY 3, 2026

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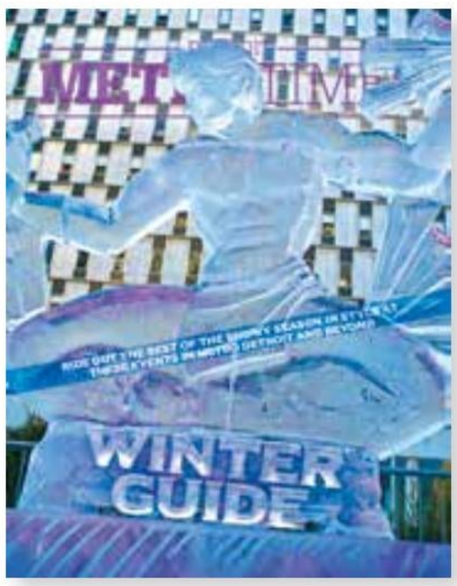

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-LIVE ON STAGE-
SEAN BLACKMAN'S IN TRANSIT
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WEDNESDAY JANUARY 28
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NEWS & VIEWS

Feedback

More readers react to Detroit Mayor Mary Sheffield officially being sworn in as the first Black woman to lead the city.

In an interview with @MCmuckraker @metrotimes, Mayor Mary Sheffield says she wants her success to be judged on improving overall quality of life for Detroiters.

Notably, she calls arts and culture an "untapped economic engine that we haven't fully utilized," says planning to invest in these things at a new level.

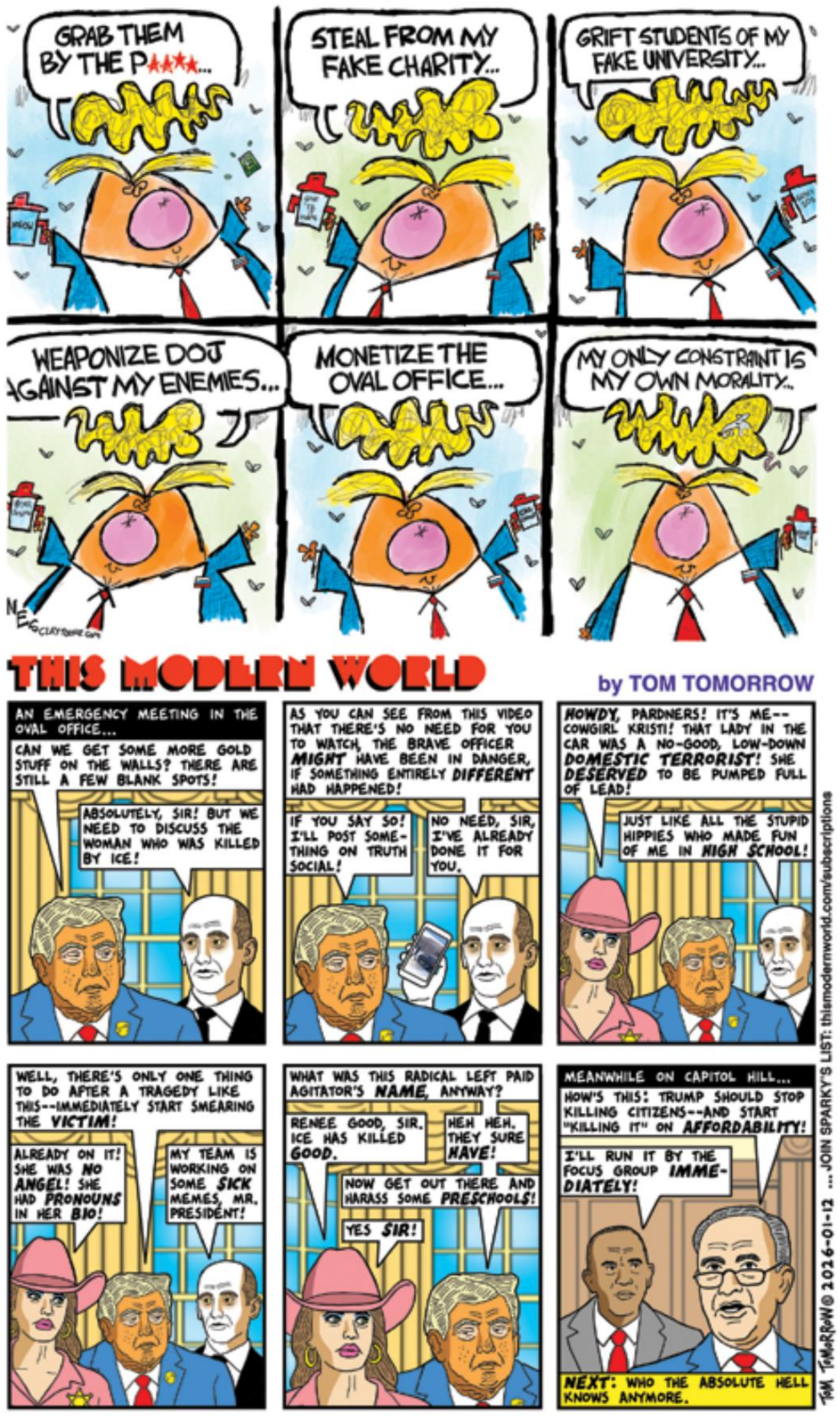
She also talks about husband Ricky Jackson Jr., saying he's an anchor who helps keep stability and peace.
—Annalise Frank, @annalise_frank, X

It's the only responsibility she's ever had.. never had a real job. Never created real jobs. Was always paid by a government check. Let's see how she does.
—@realtorrutledge Instagram

CONGRATULATIONS👏❤️🔥🙌
—Michelle Robertson, Facebook

Get ICE out of our city
—Lisa Gonzalez, Facebook

Have an opinion? Sound off! letters@metrointhed.com. MT


GRAB THEM BY THE P★★★...
STEAL FROM MY FAKE CHARITY...
GRIFT STUDENTS OF MY FAKE UNIVERSITY...
WEAPONIZE DOJ AGAINST MY ENEMIES...
MONETIZE THE OVAL OFFICE...
MY ONLY CONSTRAINT IS MY OWN MORALITY...
THIS MODERN WORLD
by TOM TOMORROW
AN EMERGENCY MEETING IN THE OVAL OFFICE...
CAN WE GET SOME MORE GOLD STUFF ON THE WALLS? THERE ARE STILL A FEW BLANK SPOTS!
ABSOLUTELY, SIR! BUT WE NEED TO DISCUSS THE WOMAN WHO WAS KILLED BY ICE!
AS YOU CAN SEE FROM THIS VIDEO THAT THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO WATCH, THE BRAVE OFFICER MIGHT HAVE BEEN IN DANGER, IF SOMETHING ENTIRELY DIFFERENT HAD HAPPENED!
IF YOU SAY SO! I'LL POST SOMETHING ON TRUTH SOCIAL!
NO NEED, SIR, I'VE ALREADY DONE IT FOR YOU.
HOWDY, PARDNERS! IT'S ME-- COWGIRL KRISTI! THAT LADY IN THE CAR WAS A NO-GOOD, LOW-DOWN DOMESTIC TERRORIST! SHE DESERVED TO BE PUMPED FULL OF LEAD!
JUST LIKE ALL THE STUPID HIPPIES WHO MADE FUN OF ME IN HIGH SCHOOL!
WELL, THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO AFTER A TRAGEDY LIKE THIS--IMMEDIATELY START SMEARING THE VICTIM!
ALREADY ON IT! SHE WAS NO ANGEL! SHE HAD PRONOUNS IN HER BIO!
MY TEAM IS WORKING ON SOME SICK MEMES, MR. PRESIDENT!
WHAT WAS THIS RADICAL LEFT PAID AGITATOR'S NAME, ANYWAY?
RENEE GOOD, SIR. ICE HAS KILLED GOOD.
HEH HEH. THEY SURE HAVE!
NOW GET OUT THERE AND HARASS SOME PRESCHOOLS!
YES SIR!
MEANWHILE ON CAPITOL HILL...
HOW'S THIS: TRUMP SHOULD STOP KILLING CITIZENS--AND START "KILLING IT" ON AFFORDABILITY!
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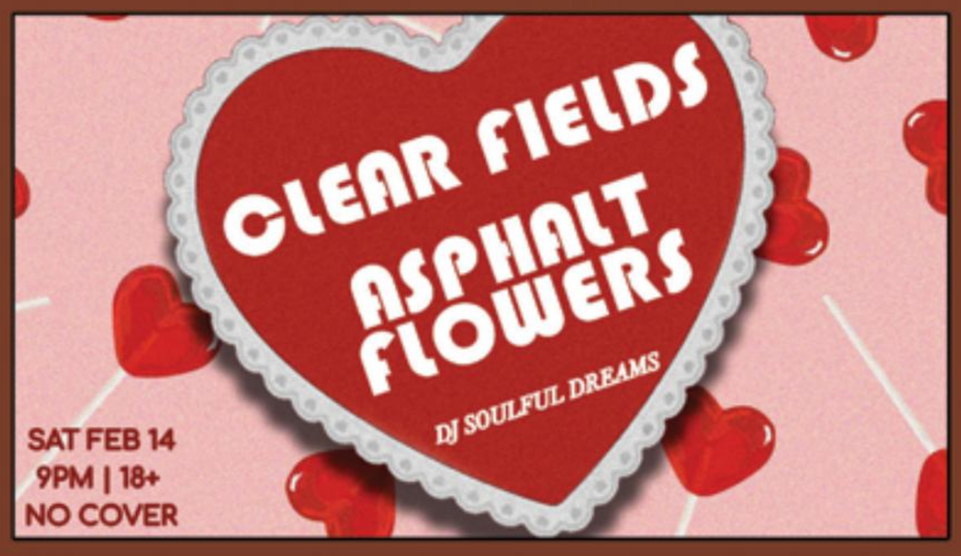
18	19 CLOSED	20	21	22	23 **CHECKER** CAVEMAN & BAM BAM DJ SKEEZ	24 **SORTED! MOD CLUB** DJ ALRIGHT MIKE TROMBLEY
25	26 CLOSED	27	28 **CLASSIC LOUNGE SOUNDS** WITH KESHTKAR & CO.	29 **KOOL-AID ACID TEST SHOWCASE**	30 **THE LUDDITES** DJ DANTON	31 **CINCYDE** THE FLIPSTERS DJ HORRORSHOW



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FRI FEB 13
WARHORSES
W/ CHERRY DROP
& DJ SANDFORD

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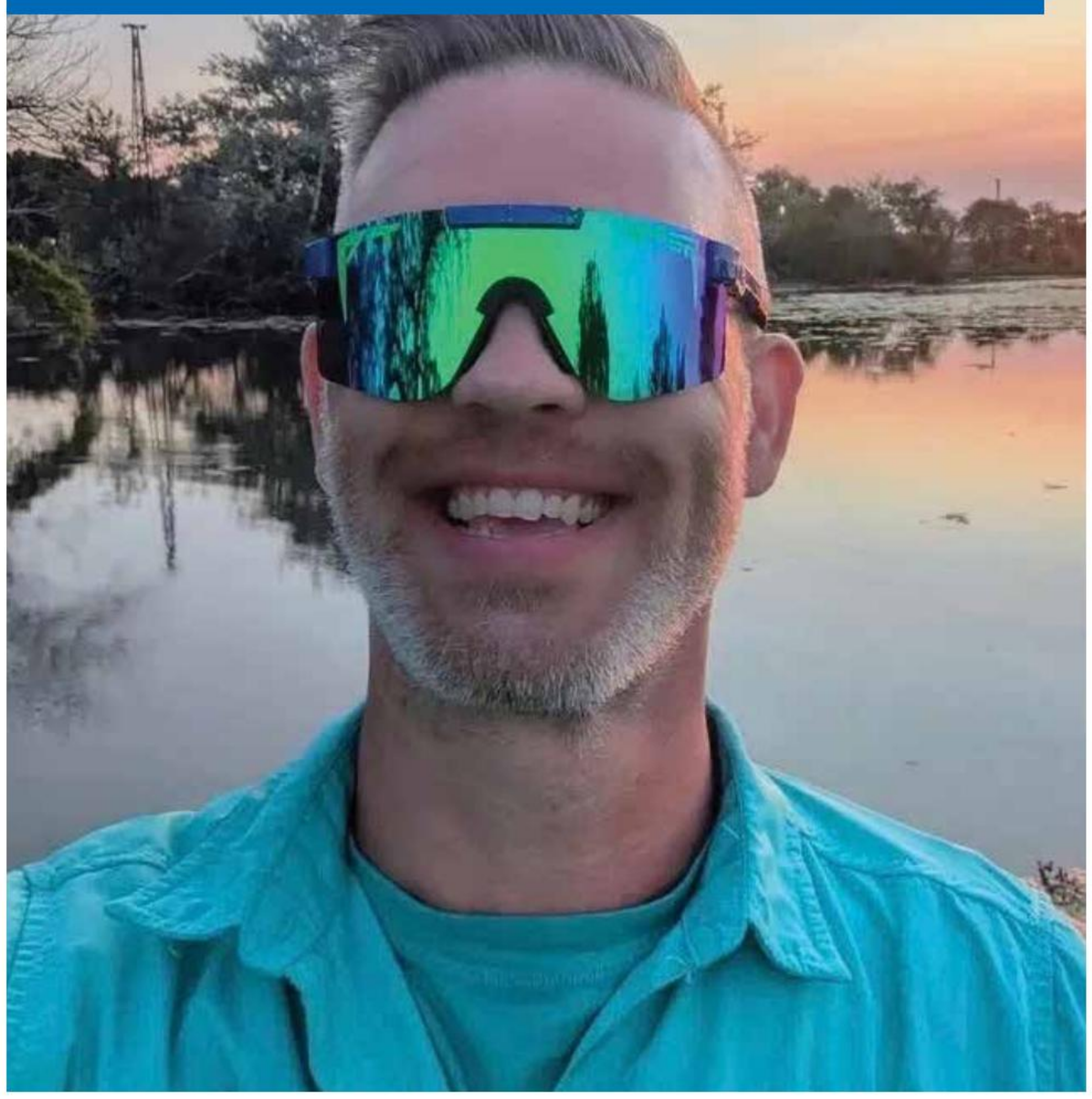


TJ Sabula. COURTESY PHOTO

UAW, crowdfunding campaigns back Ford worker suspended for heckling Trump in Dearborn

The United Auto Workers last week condemned President Donald Trump's "vulgar" response to a Ford worker who heckled him during a plant tour in Dearborn and said the union is backing the employee after he was suspended.

In a statement released last Wednesday, UAW Vice President Laura Dickerson, the union's Ford Department director, said the worker TJ Sabula, a 40-year-old line worker at the automaker's Dearborn Truck Plant, is "a proud member of a strong and fighting union" and that the UAW supports his right to speak out.

"He believes in freedom of speech, a principle we wholeheartedly embrace, and we stand with our membership in protecting their voice on the job," Dickerson said.

Dickerson added that the union will ensure the worker "receives the full protection of all negotiated contract language safeguarding his job and his rights as a union member."

She continued, "Workers should never be subjected to vulgar language or behavior by anyone — including the President of the United States."

The statement comes a day after Sabula was suspended following an exchange with Trump during his visit Tuesday to Ford's F-150 plant in Dearborn. Sabula shouted "pedophile protector" at the president in reference to accusations that the Trump administration is covering up an investigation into Jeffrey Epstein, the late convicted sex offender and former associate of Trump.

Video showed Trump responding with a middle finger and by mouthing "fuck you" twice.

U.S. Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Detroit, and U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell, D-Ann Arbor, have also spoken out in support of the worker.

"He's right. The president is, in fact, protecting pedophiles," Tlaib said on X Wednesday. "Don't come to my district and expect a warm welcome. Release the Epstein files!"

Meanwhile, two GoFundMe campaigns for Sabula have raised more than $450,000. A GoFundMe spokesperson told *The Detroit Free Press* the fundraisers are legitimate.

—Steve Neavling

Study questions whether Detroit sales tax is worth it

Detroiters already pay one of the highest tax rates in the state.

Is the city ready for another tax hike?

A new analysis from the Citizens Research Council of Michigan examined the potential impact of a 1% sales and use tax in Detroit and found that the revenue may be too limited to justify the steps needed to adopt it.

The tax could generate between $42 and $72 million a year, but that is only 5% or less of the city's budget, the report states.

The 59-page report, "Evaluating a Local-Option Sales Tax Policy for Detroit," was produced at the request of the Detroit City Council's Legislative Policy Division, which asked the nonpartisan research group to examine "innovative ways to increase city revenues" without "placing an undue burden on its residents."

The Citizens Research Council says the revenue from a local tax would be limited, and the barriers to adopt it would be significant.

"While the path to adopting a local sales tax option for Michigan's local governments is daunting," the report argues that broader access to local taxes could improve the fiscal health of large cities and counties.

Detroit already has multiple local taxes, including a city income tax, casino wagering taxes, and utility surcharges, in addition to county and state levies.

"Because of the layering of all these taxes, many of which are levied at the highest (or among the highest) rates in the state, Detroit residents are among the highest taxed in the state," the report states.

Even estimating what Detroit could raise is complicated, the report says, because Michigan does not track sales tax collections by city and because visitor spending is hard to measure.

The Citizens Research Council used two main approaches. One relies on household retail spending estimates. Detroiters spend $16,727 per household on retail goods, which would translate to about $167 per household under a 1% tax. Multiplied across 253,207 households, that comes to $42.4 million annually.

The other approach attempts to capture a wider range of taxable activity beyond retail goods. Under that approach, the Citizens Research Council estimates that a local sales tax of 1% could raise nearly $72 million annually.

Even if Detroit's leaders decided the money is worth it, the report says a local sales tax would require major state action first.

"Authorizing a local sales tax in Michigan will require amending the state Constitution, adopting state statutes authorizing local sales and use taxes, the local governing body to enact an ordinance, and voter approval of a new tax," the report states.

Because so many purchases now happen online, the report says a local sales tax would probably need to be collected and managed at the state level.

Madhu Anderson, the report's author and a senior research associate for local affairs at the Citizens Research Council, said that the path of adopting a local sales tax "is daunting" and that the research suggests it "may be better suited to be levied at the county or regional levels to maximize potential revenue and minimize potential economic disruptions."

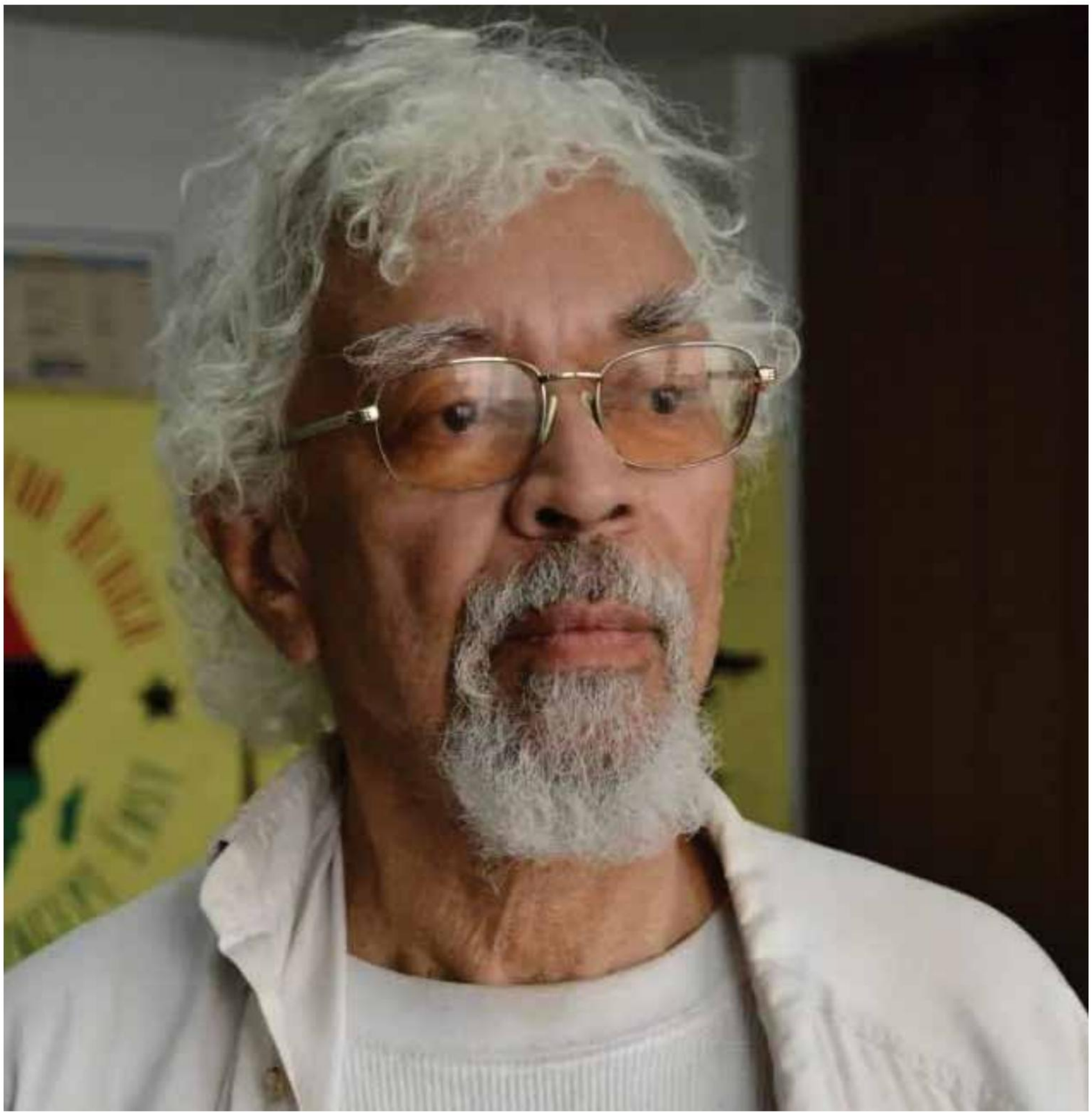
The report says the city is working to raise service levels in the years following bankruptcy, while also planning for major obligations ahead.

"The City of Detroit is reviewing potential local option taxes to raise city revenues to improve city services and address needs it anticipates in the future," the report states, citing efforts to put services "on par with surrounding communities," make pension payments that are again "a city responsibility after a 10-year hiatus," and "capture economic benefits from growth in visitor activity downtown."

The Citizens Research Council notes that the state's municipal finance structure relies heavily on property taxes that are limited by state law. The report points out that local governments in Michigan have "few options to levy local taxes," which can be especially punishing in communities with weaker tax bases.

For now, the report does not urge Detroit to race toward a ballot proposal to raise the sales tax. It leaves city and state leaders to decide whether an additional $42 million to $72 million a year is worth pursuing a constitutional amendment, new statutes, a local ordinance, and a citywide vote, while also trying to avoid pushing residents and shoppers to lower tax areas.

—Steve Neavling



David Rambeau. COURTESY PHOTO

Remembering David Rambeau, dead at 91

Like many of those who will recall memories of David Rambeau, who died Nov. 1, I remember my first days with him and so many subsequent unforgettable moments. A fresh one came to mind when I learned he had joined the ancestors on November the first, a birthday I share with my wife. He was 91 years old and left a magnificent legacy in various endeavors, most notably in the theater and television.

The last time I saw him, by happenstance, occurred in 2017 when I was in town to participate in an Open Society conference at the Westin Book Cadillac Hotel. (It was very much like the chance meeting we had three years earlier at the Charles Wright Museum, and I captured that occasion with a photo that can be found in my book, *Black Detroit*.)

During a break I bumped into him in front of the statue of Alexander Macomb. The irony of meeting him there, one a notorious slave master and the other a noted civil rights activist, was not lost on either of us, and we commented on its fortuity among other things.

He didn't share my enthusiasm about attending the conference, dismissing it with his usual Black Nationalist ardor. It was in keeping with the David I had come to know for over fifty years, beginning during his days at the Concept East Theater, where often exuded a matchless competency on the stage. In the late '60s and early '70s, when I taught at Wayne State University, I invited David to either lecture or perform for my students, and he chose to, along with his wife, Vonnie, do an interpretation of *Dutchman*by Amiri Baraka (née LeRoi Jones). They were both remarkable.

A few years later, I offered David a teaching position with me at Monteith College, where he was part of a team-taught course, including Gloria House (Aneb Kgositsile), and Ernie (Mkalimoto) Allen. He wowed the students with his history of the Black theater and challenged them with thoroughgoing assignments.

There were several years of separation, and I mainly heard of David's activities from his brother, Richard, or occasionally from his television show *For My People*, where I often made guest appearances.

I will never forget his commitment to the community, basically funneled through his creation of Project B.A.I.T (Black Awareness in Television). David, no matter what the context, did not suffer fools gladly, and never relinquished his passion for Black self-determination.

From a distance, I kept in touch with him via the internet and his outspoken positions delivered online, particularly his concern about the Black theater debates surrounding the curriculum at Wayne State.

Right to the end of his life, David was as combative as ever, fervently involved in Black education, especially Black literacy, and many of the last emails I received from stressed these pursuits.

No doubt about it, he will be missed and always remember his famous quote: "Teams win!"

—Herb Boyd

Dittrich Furs announces closing

It's the end of an era for Detroit.

After more than 130 years, the owners of Dittrich Furs — one of the city's oldest privately held businesses and a Detroit fashion icon — announced their retirement and closing of the company.

The fifth-generation owners made the announcement last Saturday on its website dittrichfurs.com and on social media. "It is with deep gratitude — and a somewhat heavy heart — that we share this news," the company wrote. "After much reflection, the Dittrich family has made the decision to retire and focus on the health and well-being of our family. This decision marks the closing of a remarkable era, one filled with relationships, traditions, and memories we will always cherish."

The message was attributed to "The Dittrich Family."

The company held a 70% liquidation sale on more than 3,000 items valued at more than $9 million.

The company added, "Serving this community has been our esteemed privilege, and Dittrich Furs will forever remain a part of Detroit's history because of you."

The Dittrich Furs store is located at 7373 Third Ave., in Detroit's New Center area.

—Lee DeVito

The "Bottle House" at 39 W. Elza Ave., Hazel Park. COURTESY PHOTO

Historic Hazel Park 'bottle house' hits market

When he learned about a quirky, nearly century-old metro Detroit home made from concrete blocks embedded with thousands of glass bottles, Carl Schiller says he knew he had to save it.

"As soon as I saw the place, my jaw just hit the floor," Schiller tells *Metro Times*. "I could not believe how cool it was. And I also couldn't believe I hadn't heard of it."

An Oakland County native with 30 years of real estate experience, Schiller was unaware of the modest yet unique property, built in 1937 and located just off of John R Road at 39 W. Elza Ave. in Hazel Park.

The home's longtime owners reached out via his real estate business website housefullofcash.com and inquired if he'd be interested in purchasing the property, which had been passed down through their family since 1951.

Schiller learned it was originally built by one Omar Reese, an assembly line worker at Hamtramck's Dodge Main factory who couldn't afford to buy a home for his family, but set out to build one himself. At the time, labor disputes among timber workers in the Upper Peninsula and United Auto Workers in the Detroit area made lumber expensive, but Reese had an idea to build his home using concrete blocks, which he embedded with colorful pieces of bottles.

"He cleaved off the butts of the bottles and stuck them in, purely because he liked light refraction off the colored bottles," Schiller says. "It was very cool."

According to Schiller, it took Reese at least two years to build the house with he and his family living in the basement throughout the construction process.

The home is dotted with some 20,000 antique bottles, including green 7-Up, red wine, and navy blue Noxzema lotion, the latter of which inspired a fresh coat of bold paint on the home's garage door.

"For me, it's a 90-year piece of art. All these bottles are frozen in concrete time," Schiller says, adding that it's "a Detroit-specific piece."

Schiller says other potential buyers offered more money, but the owners wanted to sell it to someone who would preserve it.

"She said, 'I want to sell it, but I want to sell it to someone that's going to keep it,'" Schiller says.

"Little did I know what I was in for," he adds.

The home had fallen into disrepair over the years, with a leaky roof causing water damage. Schiller says he quickly burned through his initial $50,000 budget in a rehab that took four years to complete.

"This firmly went from business operation to labor of love," he says, adding, "We really had to take the entire interior down to the studs."

The project required all new ductwork and plumbing. Since the home is so cozy, Schiller says he decided to make the interior "airy and light and open," which entailed taking down walls between the main living room and the kitchen to make an open floor layout, making all windows as large as possible, and adding skylights.

"Pretty much everything had to be replaced," Schiller says. "That's why it took so long. But I'm glad that it did, because if there was some world where we were able to do this in three or four months, like a normal full rehab, it wouldn't have been this cool. We wouldn't have been able to take this much time with it."

The home also boasts new quartz counters and hardwood floors. To add some character to the modernized interior, Schiller took a black-and-white *Detroit Free Press* photo from the 1950s to the Detroit Wallpaper Co., which created a custom wallpaper used on accent panels throughout the home.

To prepare the home for sale, Schiller says he even hand-scrubbed each and every bottle himself.

"It got me acquainted with the bottles and what all the cool ones were," he says.

Also included is an attached property with a separate entrance that Schiller believes may have started off as a detached garage and could be repurposed as an artist's studio or a home office. But he says he originally purchased the home with the idea of making it into an Airbnb.

"I want to find someone that I can either sell to or maybe even partner with to turn it into a short-term rental and really turn it back over to the community," he says, "so anyone that wants to participate in the experience would have the opportunity to book it and do so."

He adds, "It was more about what it was and what it represented and just being a cool piece of metro Detroit history."

The home is 1,225 square feet and includes two bedrooms, a bathroom, a basement, and a garage. More information about the property is available at hazelparkbottlehouse.com and zillow.com.

—Lee DeVito

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Sat 9-2

EMPLOYMENT

Senior Program Manager, Plastic Omnium Auto Inergy, Troy, MI. Plan, lead, & manage revolving OEM off-road ATV, commercial van/truck fuel tank dvlpmt prgms for future model yrs & assure dlvry of integrated plastic fuel tank dvlpmt projects, from concept to launch, Start of Production (SOP), & End of Production for fuel tank production at 4 Plastic Omnium mfg plants in U.S. & MEX for cycle life to 2029/2035 & beyond. Plan & administer large pre-production project tooling & dvlpmt budgets incl. acquisition of mfg tooling; labor; & plant facilities construction at 4 U.S./MEX mfg plants. Plan, lead & manage team in US/MEX incl. Product App, Ind & Qlty Engrs, Prgm Buyers, Sales Mgrs, & Plant Prgm Mgrs at fuel tank mfg plants. Lead extended U.S./MEX multifunctional team. Reqrd travel in U.S. & MEX to visit OEM customers & perform internal mfg plant site visits to verify mfg process readiness, project execution, & dlvry performance, up to 6 weeks P/A. Bachelor, Bus Admin, Bus, Intnl or Foreign Trade, Engrg, or related. 24 mos exp as Prgm or Project Mgr, or related, planning & leading psgr vehicle fuel tank or sys dvlpmt projects or prgms, & assuring dlvry, from concept, to launch & SOP for production at mfg plant, or related. E-mail resume to general.hr@opmobility.com (Ref#1895).

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WINTER GUIDE

RIDE OUT THE REST OF THE SNOWY SEASON IN STYLE AT THESE EVENTS IN METRO DETROIT AND BEYOND

By Metro Times staff

Detroit's Robert C. Valade Park has "Winter at Valade" events Saturday and Sunday through March 1. NADIR ALI

WINTER IN METRO Detroit doesn't have to mean hibernation. From ice rinks and ice sculptures to chili cook-offs, polar plunges, and high-octane car shows, the cold months are packed with reasons to bundle up and get out.

THE RINK AT CAMPUS MARTIUS PARK

Named the "No. 1 Best Ice Skating Rink" in the country by *USA Today* 10Best in 2024 and 2025, downtown Detroit's picturesque skating rink is open through March seven days a week. After skating, you can enjoy hot chocolate in Chalet 313, a glass-covered heated lounge with views of Campus Martius Park.

From 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays; 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesdays; 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; noon-8 p.m. Sundays; downtowndetroit.org. Tickets are $8-$12 for admission, $6 for skate rentals, and $2 for shoe check.

DETROIT AUTO SHOW

After a few years of experimenting with September dates, the Detroit Auto Show returned back to its traditional time in January last year, though the 2025 show was quite sparse compared to previous years, when the Motor City auto industry's engines were really roaring. Where the show may lack some of the glamor and glitz of its heyday, one shift at Huntington Place has been more test driving opportunities. Expect immersive exhibits, hands-on experiences, and interactive displays that go beyond the showroom floor, along with family-friendly attractions and opportunities to get up close with the cars shaping the future. Whether you're a gearhead, tech enthusiast, or just curious about what you'll be driving in years to come, the Detroit Auto Show remains a must-see winter tradition.

From 10 a.m.-8 p.m. through Saturday, Jan. 24 and 10 a.m.-7 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 25; Huntington Place, 1 Washington Blvd., Detroit; detroitautoshow.com. Tickets start at $11.04.

FIRE & ICE FESTIVAL: WINTER AT VALADE

A medieval-themed festival on the Detroit River with bonfires, turkey legs, ice carving, vendors, live performances, and more, highlighted by the lighting of the Fire and Ice Tower — a seven-foot ice structure lit in a massive bonfire at 6 p.m. on Saturday.

From noon-8 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 24 and noon-6 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 25; Robert C. Valade Park, 2670 Atwater St., Detroit; detroitriverfront.org. No cover.

ZEHNDER'S SNOWFEST

Michigan's "Little Bavaria" is most associated with Christmastime, but winter magic continues with its long-running Zehnder's Snowfest. Festivities include ice and snow sculptures, live entertainment, a petting farm, fireworks, children's activities, and more.

From Wednesday, Jan. 28-Sunday, Feb. 1; Zehnder's of Frankenmuth, 730 S. Main St., Frankenmuth; zehnders.com/snowfest. No cover.

PLYMOUTH ICE FESTIVAL

Downtown Plymouth dazzles with ice sculptures, a zip line, shopping, and more.

From 5-10 p.m. Friday, Jan. 30; 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 31; 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 1; downtown Plymouth; plymouthicefestival.com. No cover.

SOUTHFIELD WINTER FESTIVAL

Family-friendly fun indoors and outdoors, including ice skating, horse-drawn carriage rides, rock climbing wall, marshmallow roasting, and more.

From 2-4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 1, 26000 Evergreen Rd., Southfield; bit.ly/SfldWinterFest26. Cover is $4 for Southfield residents, $5 for non-residents.

SHIVER ON THE RIVER

A free, family-friendly winter celebration of the Detroit River with ice carvings, a family magic show, winter birding, kids' activities, free caricatures, and free access to the Dossin Great Lakes Museum for the day.

From 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 7; Belle Isle (Dossin Great Lakes Museum and Belle Isle Nature Center), Detroit; detroitriver.org. No cover.

LAKE ORION ICE FEST

Family-friendly event with ice sculptures, live carving demonstrations, a Selfie Station with a chance to win prizes, a scavenger hunt, bingo, a Chilly Chili Cook-Off competition, and more.

From 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 7;

Robert C. Valade Park celebrates winter with games like curling. NADIR ALI

downtown Lake Orion; facebook.com. No cover.

BERKLEY WINTERFEST

This outdoor winter celebration features ice skating, ice sculptures, s'mores, games, a petting farm, doughnuts, and more.

From noon-2 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 7; Berkeley Community Center, 2400 Robina Ave., Berkley; berkleymi.gov/winterfest. No cover.

ROUGE PARK WINTERFEST

Hosted by Friends of Rouge Park, this free, family-friendly annual winter festival features sledding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, hot chocolate, bonfires, marshmallow toasting, an ice fishing demonstration, and, weather permitting, ice skating on the marsh.

From noon-4 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 7; 21800 Joy Rd., Detroit; eventbrite.com. No cover.

POLAR PLUNGE

Brave metro Detroiters take a dip into frigid waters to raise funds for the Special Olympics Michigan. Plunges are set for Wayne County on Saturday, Feb. 14; Macomb County on Saturday, Feb. 21; Washtenaw County on Sunday, Feb. 22; and Oakland County on Saturday, Feb. 28.

See plungemi.org for full schedule and locations.

CUPID'S UNDIE RUN

Strip down for a good cause this Valentine's Day. This charity event sees hundreds of people in various states of undress brave the cold to embark on a mile-long run. Dubbed "the nation's largest pantless party," the event raises awareness of neurofibromatosis, a genetic disorder that causes tumors to grow on nerves throughout the body.

From noon-4 p.m. (run starts at 2 p.m.) on Saturday, Feb. 14; Tin Roof, 47 E. Adams St., Detroit; cupids.org. Registration is $40.

LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION: WINTER AT VALADE

Detroit rings in the Chinese New Year with a parade including lion and dragon dances, musical performances from a Chinese orchestra, arts and crafts, and more. The event is presented by the Michigan Taiwanese American Organization.

From noon-8 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 14; Robert C. Valade Park, 2670 Atwater St., Detroit; detroitriverfront.org. No cover.

WATERFORD FIREWORKS & FLANNELS NIGHT OUT

An illuminated walking path with horse-drawn wagon rides and pony rides, petting farm, live music, food trucks, beer tent, sledding hill, face painting, winter games, arts and crafts, fireworks, and more (weather permitting). The path will remain open Fridays-Sundays through March 1.

From 4-8 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 14; Waterford Oaks County Park, 1702 Scott Lake Rd., Waterford Township; facebook.com. No cover.

73RD ANNUAL AUTORAMA

This annual hot rod competition sees gearheads showing off their custom rides in a competition for the coveted Ridler Award, the Miss Autorama pin-up contest, celebrity guests, and more.

From noon-10 p.m. Friday, Feb. 27; 9 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Huntington Place, 1 Washington Blvd., Detroit; autorama.com. Tickets are $10-$30.

WORLD OF WINTER

Billed as the "the largest winter festival in America", this event features art installations, light shows, and other activities throughout downtown Grand Rapids.

Through March 1; downtown Grand Rapids; worldofwintergr.com. No cover.

HAMTRAMCK BLOWOUT

Metro Times's former local music festival is in good hands, now organized by the folks behind the Hamtramck Labor Day Festival. While a lineup for this year's fest hasn't yet been announced, expect red-hot performances from dozens of local acts at venues across this Detroit enclave.

From Thursday, March 5-Saturday, March 7; hamtramckblowout.com. Ticket info TBA. MT

Detroit's Robert C. Valade Park celebrates Lunar New Year with dragon dancers. NADIR ALI

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WHAT'S GOING ON

Aziz Ansari

After successful stints with *Parks and Rec* and the award-winning *Master of None*, Ansari recently released *Good Fortune*, a supernatural comedy drama film written and directed by the comedian in his feature directorial debut. He's back on the road, promising an evening of laughs.

Shows at 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 23; Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. 4th St., Royal Oak; royaloakmusictheatre.com. Tickets start at $77.

Halloween, Demon Bitch, Baazlvaat

A night of all Michigan metal bands. Halloween are veterans of the scene, formed in Detroit in 1985. Meanwhile, Demon Bitch formed in the Motor City in the 2010s, reviving a classic metal sound. And Baazlvaat is a rising band that formed in Flint in 2020.

Doors at 8 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 24; tokenlounge.com. Tickets are $24.38.

Burlesque Karaoke

Members of the audience are welcome to belt out their favorite karaoke tunes accompanied by live burlesque dancers.

Starts at 7 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 25; Ghost Light, 2314 Caniff Ave., Hamtramck; eventbrite.com. Tickets are $23.18.

Umphrey's Mcgee

The long-running jam band brings a

Umphrey's McGee. COURTESY PHOTO

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retooled lineup to the Motor City.

Starts at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 31; The Fillmore, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit; ticketmaster.com. Tickets start at $31.

Black Planet x Industrial Detroit

A collaborative event featuring goth, post-punk, industrial, EBM, and industrial techno music that taps into Detroit's edgy, underground music scene.

Starts at 9 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 31; Tangent Gallery & Hastings Street Ballroom, 715 E. Milwaukee Ave., Detroit; ra.co. Tickets are $11.45.

ALLEYCVT

A dance night featuring Los Angeles-based electronic music DJ and producer ALLEYCVT, who cites metro Detroit's GRiZ as a major inspiration. With support from STELLER and TAZU. ALLEYCVT has partnered with PLUS1 so that $1 per ticket goes to support Re:wild and their ecological conservation work.

Starts at 9 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026; Russell Industrial Center, 1600 Clay St., Detroit; ticketmaster.com. Tickets start at $65.

'80s vs. '90s: Mega 80's vs. Class of '98

A high-energy, '80s-themed party featuring live music by the Mega 80s and Class of '98s tribute bands.

Starts at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 31; Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale; themagicbag.com. MT

ALLEYCVT. COURTESY PHOTO

T COUNT

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Detroit Opera

DIRECTOR **BRENNA CORNER**
CONDUCTOR **MARIT STRINDLUND**
MUSIC **POUL RUDERS**
LIBRETTO **PAUL BENTLEY**

THE HANDMAID'S TALE

"Once, my body belonged to me."

The Handmaid's Tale provides a chilling look into an imagined future, where America's fragile democracy collapses into religious tyranny. Echoing contemporary concerns about the overlap between government and religion, this fictional story is timelier than ever. Within the frame of an academic conference held in the distant future, the opera depicts a contemporary America in the throes of a theocratic dictatorship where women have been stripped of all rights, including the right to bodily autonomy. Before Margaret Atwood's beloved classic of speculative fiction became the source material of a popular TV series, Poul Ruders' gripping musical treatment brought the story to operatic stages around the world.

Visit our website for free community events around this opera.

VIEWER DISCRETION IS ADVISED

Not recommended for children under 16 years of age.

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WHAT'S GOING ON CONT'D

MUSIC

Wednesday Jan 21

Live/Concert

Cubist Agenda 8 pm-midnight; First Place Lounge, 16921 Harper Ave, Detroit; No Cover.

The Function with DJ Dez Andres 9 pm-2 am; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover.

Cubist Agenda 8 pm-midnight; First Place Lounge, 16921 Harper Ave, Detroit; No Cover.

The Function with DJ Dez Andres 9 pm-2 am; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover.

DJ/Dance

Planet Funk 7-10 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Way Back Wednesdays w. DJ Righteous 8 am-11:59 pm; New Dodge Lounge, 8850 Joseph Campau Ave., Hamtramck; 5.

Karaoke/Open Mic

Hump Day Karaoke & Music Trivia 8 pm-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

Thursday Jan 22

Live/Concert

Dueling Pianos: An Interactive Entertainment Experience 8 pm-midnight; AXIS Lounge, 1777 3rd St., Detroit;

Ellise 7 pm; Pike Room, 1 S. Saginaw, Pontiac;

KC & the Sunshine Band 8 pm; Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit;

Tres Suite 7-9 pm; The Hawk Theatre, 29995 W 12 Mile Rd, Farmington Hills; Tickets- $20 in advance, $25 at the door.

Dueling Pianos: An Interactive Entertainment Experience 8 pm-midnight; AXIS Lounge, 1777 3rd St., Detroit;

DJ/Dance

Curated Cool 7-10 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Karaoke/Open Mic

Continuing This Week Karaoke/ Open Mic

Drag Queen Karaoke 8 pm-2 am; Woodward Avenue Brewers, 22646 Woodward Ave., Ferndale; no cover.

Elixer: DJs John Ryan and GEO 8 pm-midnight; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; No cover.

Friday Jan 23

Live/Concert

Celebrating a Legacy: PUBLIQuartet to perform at Detroit Institute of Arts with Special guests guitarist A. Spencer Barefield and composer George Lewis 7-8:30 pm; Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA), 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit; Free with DIA admission.

Danny Seraphine 8 pm; Andiamo Celebrity Showroom, 7096 E. 14 Mile Rd., Warren;

Dueling Pianos / Dueling Wines 6 pm; District 142, 142 Maple St., Wyandotte;

LOVE LETTERS TO YAH: A RETURN TO THE CENTER Sky Covington performs Jazz — In Concert 8-11 pm; Aretha's Jazz Cafe, 350 Madison St., Detroit; $40.

Magic Bag Presents: D.M. vs NIN 7 pm; Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

Saddle Up: Onesie Party! 8 pm; Diamondback Music Hall, 49345 S. Interstate 94 Service Dr., Belleville;

Stanaj 7 pm; Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress St., Detroit;

Two Way Petting Zoo, New Relatives, Evergreen, Girthquake 7 pm; Sanctuary Detroit, 2932 Caniff St., Hamtramck;

DJ/Dance

Checker w/ Caveman & Bam Bam + DJ Skeez 9 pm; Bowlero Lanes & Lounge, 4209 Coolidge Hwy., Royal Oak; 0.

Open Air Fridays 4-10 pm; Woodbridge Pub, 5169 Trumbull St., Detroit; 0.

Saturday Jan 24

Live/Concert

Back by Popular Demand - The Velvet Fluegeltones 7-11 pm; Ro Cham Beau, 3321 Michigan Avenue, Detroit; 30.

Halloween ▪ Demon Bitch ▪ Baazlvaat 8:30 pm; The Token Lounge, 28949 Joy Rd., Westland;

Let's Hang On 8 pm; Andiamo Celebrity Showroom, 7096 E. 14 Mile Rd., Warren;

Magic Bag Presents: 80s vs 90s - MEGA vs CLASS 7 pm; Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

Piss Ant, Backbiter, World Of Malice, Lie In Wait, Chop House 6 pm; Sanctuary Detroit, 2932 Caniff St., Hamtramck;

RIO – A Tribute To Duran Duran W/S/G Sanctuary – Cult Tribute 8 pm; Emerald Theatre, 31 N. Walnut St., Mount Clemens;

Saddle Up: Flannel Night 8 pm; Diamondback Music Hall, 49345 S. Interstate 94 Service Dr., Belleville;

Saturday, January 24th, 2026 Halloween W/ Demon Bitch & Baazlvaat @ The Token Lounge 8 pm; The Token Lounge, 28949 Joy Rd., Westland; $20 in advance - $30 @ door.

shame 7 pm; The Loving Touch, 22634 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

SORTED! Mod Club w/ DJs Alr!ght and Mike Trombley 9 pm; Bowlero Lanes & Lounge, 4209 Coolidge Hwy., Royal Oak; 0.

United We Dance: The Ultimate Rave Experience (18+) 8 pm; Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress St., Detroit;

DJ/Dance

Saturday Grind 11 am-3 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Saturday Grind 11 am-3 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Sunday Jan 25

Live/Concert

Magic Bag Presents: Koo Koo - Camp Spork Tour 1 pm; Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

Phil Ogilvie's Rhythm Kings 5-8 pm; Zal Gaz Grotto Club, 2070 W. Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor; No Cover (tipjar for the band).

Rock 'n' Shop at Showtime! Last Sunday of every month, 2-6 pm; Showtime Clothing, 9704 Joseph Campau Ave., Hamtramck; Free.

Tea and Treasures: A Toast to America at 250 with Detroit Opera 3-5 pm; The War Memorial, 32 Lake Shore Drive, Grosse Pointe Farms; $130-$390.

DJ/Dance

SPKR BRNCH 11 am-3 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Karaoke/Open Mic

Sunday Service Karaoke Hosted by Sister DJ Larry 8 pm-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

Sunday Service Karaoke | DJ Larry noon-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

Monday Jan 26

Live/Concert

DRAMA - Platonic Romance Tour 7 pm; Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress St., Detroit;

The Teena Marie Tribute ft. Cayla Stus (Sky Covington's Preservation of Jazz Monday Night Music Series, "Tributes") 7:30-10 pm; Aretha's Jazz Cafe, 350 Madison St., Detroit; $35.

DJ/Dance

Adult Skate Night 8:30-11 pm; Lexus Velodrome, 601 Mack Ave., Detroit; $5.

Live/Concert

Sean Blackman's In Transit 7-10 pm; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover.

Sean Blackman's In Transit 7-10 pm; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover.

Karaoke/Open Mic

Open Mic : Art in a Fly Space 7-10 pm; Detroit Shipping Company, 474 Peterboro St., Detroit; no cover.

VIP Tuesday Night Karaoke 9 pm-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

Wednesday Jan 28

Live/Concert

Cubist Agenda 8 pm-midnight; First Place Lounge, 16921 Harper Ave, Detroit; No Cover.

The Function with DJ Dez Andres 9 pm-2 am; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover.

Cubist Agenda 8 pm-midnight; First Place Lounge, 16921 Harper Ave, Detroit; No Cover.

The Function with DJ Dez Andres 9 pm-2 am; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover.

DJ/Dance

Planet Funk 7-10 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Way Back Wednesdays w. DJ Righteous 8 am-11:59 pm; New Dodge

Lounge, 8850 Joseph Campau Ave., Hamtramck; 5.

Karaoke/Open Mic

Hump Day Karaoke & Music Trivia 8 pm-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

Thursday Jan 29

Live/Concert

Dueling Pianos: An Interactive Entertainment Experience 8 pm-midnight; AXIS Lounge, 1777 3rd St., Detroit;

Dueling Pianos: An Interactive Entertainment Experience 8 pm-midnight; AXIS Lounge, 1777 3rd St., Detroit;

Joe Jordan , 7 pm; The Shelter, 431 E. Congress St., Detroit;

Johnny Gill , 8 pm; Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit;

Nick Pivot Presents: Acoustic Kool-Aid Acid Test , 8 pm; Bowlero Lanes & Lounge, 4209 Coolidge Hwy., Royal Oak; 0.

DJ/Dance

Curated Cool 7-10 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit

Karaoke/Open Mic

Drag Queen Karaoke 8 pm-2 am; Woodward Avenue Brewers, 22646 Woodward Ave., Ferndale; no cover.

Elixer: DJs John Ryan and GEO 8 pm-midnight; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; No cover.

Friday Jan 30

Live/Concert

Atmosphere - Winter Carnival Tour 2026 6 pm; The Fillmore, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit;

Hairball: The Bombastic Celebration of Arena Rock 8 pm; Caesars Palace Windsor - Augustus Ballroom, 377 E. Riverside Dr., Windsor;

La Fe Norteña en Pontiac 9 pm; El Agave, 1650 Perry St, Pontiac;

Lord of the Lost & The Birthday Massacre - Dark Winter Tour 6 pm; Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress St., Detroit;

Magic Bag Presents: Earlybirds Club 6 pm; Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

Saddle Up: Denim & Line Dancing! 8 pm; Diamondback Music Hall, 49345 S. Interstate 94 Service Dr., Belleville;

The Cookers 8 pm; 3Fifty Terrace, 350 Madison St., Detroit;

DJ/Dance

Open Air Fridays 4-10 pm; Woodbridge Pub, 5169 Trumbull St., Detroit; 0.

Saturday Jan 31

Live/Concert

Cafe Shalom featuring Detroit Medical Orchestra Wind Nonet and String Quartet 7:30-9:30 pm; Congregation Beth Shalom, 14601 Lincoln, Oak Park; $20.

FJ Tribute- Tribute to Foreigner Journey & Classic Legends 8 pm; Flagstar Strand Theatre for the Performing Arts, 12 N. Saginaw St., Pontiac;

Magic Bag Presents: MEGA 80s 7 pm; Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

MC DAVO & SABINO 7 pm; Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress St., Detroit;

Prowler - Metallica Tribute, Slipknot Tribute - Tattered & Torn, Tribute to PANTERA - Domination Detroit 7 pm; The Token Lounge, 28949 Joy Rd., Westland;

Ruda/Rich Jazz Sextet 7-10 pm; Chicane, 885 Starkweather, Plymouth; no charge.

Saddle Up: Neon Nashville Nights! 8 pm; Diamondback Music Hall, 49345 S. Interstate 94 Service Dr., Belleville;

Symphonic PFunk: Celebrating The Music of Parliament Funkadelic 8 pm; Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit;

Thunderbeard – Tribute to ZZ Top 8 pm; Emerald Theatre, 31 N. Walnut St., Mount Clemens;

UMPHREY'S McGEE - SKY'S THE LIMIT TOUR 7 pm; The Fillmore, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit;

DJ/Dance

ALLEYCVT (18+ Event) Jan. 31, 9 pm; org gallery, 1600 Clay, Detroit;

Saturday Grind 11 am-3 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Saturday Grind 11 am-3 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Sunday Feb 1

Live/Concert

Del Water Gap 7 pm; Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak;

DJ/Dance

SPKR BRNCH 11 am-3 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Karaoke/Open Mic

Sunday Service Karaoke Hosted by Sister DJ Larry 8 pm-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

Sunday Service Karaoke | DJ Larry noon-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

Monday Feb 2

Live/Concert

Take Five – All Male Jazz Revue: A Tribute to Black History Month (Sky Covington's Preservation of Jazz Monday Night Music Series, "Tribute") 7:30-10 pm; Aretha's Jazz Cafe, 350 Madison St., Detroit; 40.00.

DJ/Dance

Adult Skate Night 8:30-11 pm; Lexus Velodrome, 601 Mack Ave., Detroit; $5.

Tuesday Feb 3

Live/Concert

Sean Blackman's In Transit 7-10 pm; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover.

Sean Blackman's In Transit 7-10 pm; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover.

Karaoke/Open Mic

Open Mic : Art in a Fly Space 7-10 pm; Detroit Shipping Company, 474 Peterboro St., Detroit; no cover.

VIP Tuesday Night Karaoke 9 pm-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

THEATER

Performance

Detroit Repertory Theatre August Wilson's The Piano Lesson August Wilson's THE PIANO LESSON, directed by Janai Lashon. Berneice and her brother Boy Willie fight over the fate of the family piano; she treasures it as a precious connection to their ancestors and he sees it as the means to a more prosperous future. This fourth installment of the American Century Cycle is a haunting play about legacy. $30 advance / $35 same day Fridays, Saturdays, 8-11 pm, Sundays, 2 am-5 pm and Saturdays, 3-6 pm.

Fox Theatre Stomp - Suite Rental Packages Friday 7:30 pm and Saturday 2 & 7:30 pm.; Friday 7:30 pm and Saturday 2 & 7:30 pm.

Rosedale Community Players Intimate Apparel by Lynn Nottage By two-time Pulitzer Prize winner for Drama, Lynn Nottage. Intimate Apparel tells the poignant story of Esther, a 35-year-old seamstress in early 1900s New York City. Set against the backdrop of Esther's dreams of opening a beauty parlor, the play explores themes of gender roles, race and the complexities of intimate relationships. Intimate Apparel invites audiences to reflect on the persistent challenges faced by women, particularly women of color, in their pursuit of love and independence. 21.72 Fridays, Saturdays, 8-10 pm and Sundays, 2-4 pm.

Theatre NOVA Kayak by Jordan Hall Theatre NOVA presents: Kayak by Jordan Hall January 30 - February 22, 2026 How high's the water, Mama? Alone on a vast stretch of water, Annie Iversen recounts the chain of events which stranded her in her son's old kayak. A doting suburban mother, Annie is blindsided when her son, Peter, falls in love with Julie, a passionate environmental activist. Desperate to protect her son from what she sees as a reckless path, Annie fights to hold on—until the danger she feared finds her instead. Directed by Briana O'Neal. Shows Fridays at 8:00 pm, Saturdays at 3:00 pm General admission: $30, 65 and over: $25, Students $15 Fridays, Saturdays, 8 pm, Saturdays, 3 pm and Sundays, 2 pm.

Musical

Birmingham Village Players Once Upon a Mattress Runs Jan 9-25th at Birmingham Village Players Bring warmth, laughter and cheer to your new year when Birmingham Village Players presents the family-friendly musical comedy, Once Upon a Mattress, January 9-25, 2026. This delightful show is a re-telling of the fable, "The Princess and the Pea" featuring a talented and diverse cast of characters who will bring a smile to your face. Once Upon a Mattress runs January 9-25, 2026 at Birmingham Village Players. Thursday, Friday and Saturday shows begin at 7:30PM; Sunday matinees start at 2PM. Individual reserved tickets are $30. Call the box office, 248-644-2075, or order on the website, www.birminghamvillageplayers.com $30 Thursday 7:30-10:30 pm, Friday 7:30-10:30 pm, Saturday 7:30-10 pm and Sunday 2-4:30 pm.

FIM Whiting Auditorium Mrs. Doubtfire Mrs. Doubtfire is the new musical comedy about the things we do to stay together. Everyone's favorite Scottish nanny is entertaining people around the world in this internationally acclaimed hit musical. Based on the beloved film, Mrs. Doubtfire is the lovable, big-hearted musical comedy we all need right now. Out-of-work actor Daniel Hillard will do anything for his kids. After losing custody in a messy divorce, he creates the alter ego of

Scottish nanny Euphegenia Doubtfire in a desperate attempt to stay in his kids' lives. $43.20/$31.90 for Genesee County residents Sunday 7-9:30 pm.

Fisher Theatre - Detroit Monty Python Spamalot (Touring) - Recommended for ages 9 and up Tuesday 7:30 pm, Wednesday 7:30 pm, Thursday , 7:30 pm, Friday Jan. 30, 7:30 pm and Saturday Jan. 31, 2 & 7:30 pm.

Flagstar Strand Theatre for the Performing Arts Notre Dame Prep Middle School presents High School Musical, Jr. Friday 7 pm and Saturday 3 & 7 pm.

Meadow Brook Theatre All Shook Up Wednesday 2 & 7:30 pm, Thursday 7:30 pm, Friday 7:30 pm, Saturday 6 pm, Sunday 2 & 6:30 pm, Wednesday 2 & 7:30 pm, Thursday , 7:30 pm, Friday Jan. 30, 7:30 pm, Saturday Jan. 31, 2 & 7:30 pm and Sunday Feb. 1, 2 pm.

COMEDY

Improv

Go Comedy! Improv Theater Pandemonia The Allstar Showdown is a highly interactive improvised game show. With suggestions from the audience, our two teams will battle for your laughs. The Showdown is like "Whose Line is it Anyway," featuring a series of short improv games, challenges and more. Fridays and Saturdays 7:30pm & 9:30pm 25.00 Fridays, Saturdays.; $20 Every other Friday, 8 & 10 pm.

Stand-up

The Crofoot Ballroom This Show Is Fire — presented by Terry Hodges & Friends and DNA Productions Led by legendary comedian Terry Hodges, this high-energy showcase brings together top-tier talent for four explosive comedy shows across two nights. Each night features two shows at 7:30 p.m. and 10:00 p.m., offering multiple opportunities to experience world-class comedy in one of Michigan's most historic entertainment venues. Tickets are on sale now. $45-$60 Friday 7:30 & 10 pm and Saturday 7:30 & 10 pm.

The Music Hall GenX Takeover Comedy Tour Saturday Jan. 31, 8 pm.

Pike Room This Show Is Fire - Late Saturday Show Friday 6 pm.; Friday 10 pm.; Saturday 6 pm.; Saturday 10 pm.

Sanctuary Detroit Beautiful / Anonymous Podcast feat: Chris Gethard Saturday Jan. 31, 7 pm.

Syndicate Ferndale Comedy Night @ Syndicate Ferndale Ft. Johanna Medranda & Connor Meade! Two of Metro Detroit's silliest reunite for a night of laughs inside of our lounge! Don't miss out on a fun Thursday night filled with jokes, drinks, and snacks! Bar & Dining Room open at 4pm! We encourage you to grab dinner and drinks before the show! Drinks will be served inside the showroom as well. We can't wait to laugh with you! Doors into the showroom will open at 7pm Showtime promptly at 8pm Also performing: Patty Rooney & Melanie Hearn 20.00 Thursday 8-9 pm.

The Hawk Theatre An Evening of Stand-Up Comedy Join us for an evening of non-stop hilarity as Mark Boyd takes the stage alongside a handpicked lineup of metro-Detroit's funniest comedians. From witty observations on everyday life to uproarious anecdotes that push the boundaries of humor, this showcase promises to deliver an unforgettable night of entertainment. So gather your friends, grab your favorite drink, and prepare for a laughter-filled extravaganza that will leave you rolling in the aisles at the Ha-Ha-Hawk. Please note that these events will include adult content and language and are suitable for patrons 18+. *Beer and wine will be available for patrons 21+ Tickets- $20 in advance, $25 at the door Saturday Jan. 31, 7-10 pm.

Woodbridge Pub Comedy Night Featuring Melanie Hearn This month we've got an incredible lineup of the funniest comedians from SE Michigan & beyond. You don't want to miss featured Detroit stand-up diva, Melanie Hearn. Melanie is a local favorite, always hosting mics and headlining comedy stages, and can be seen on Channel 4's "Live in the D" Local Buzz. Get your seat early for a variety of guest comedians - experienced pros, as well as new stand-up comics still perfecting their sets. Plus, show-up-go-up open mic spots for comedians wanting to perform for an intimate, sometimes wild, crowd. Good food, good drinks and good vibes. Free. No Cover Charge Tuesday 9:30-11:30 pm.

Blind Pig Blind Pig Comedy FREE Mondays, 8 pm.

The Independent Comedy Club at Planet Ant Tonight vs Everybody: Open Mic Comedy A late night, heckle encouraged, show up, go up stand-up open mic featuring both local amateurs and touring professionals. Sign up starts at 10:30 and the show begins at 11p. Doors and Sign Up 10:30p | Show at 11p | $5 Suggested Donation* Attached bar Ghost Light opens at 7p The independent Comedy Club is a comedy club run by comics for comics inside Planet Ant Theatre. The club runs Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, offering independently produced comedy shows from 8p-12a. Presented by Planet Ant MT

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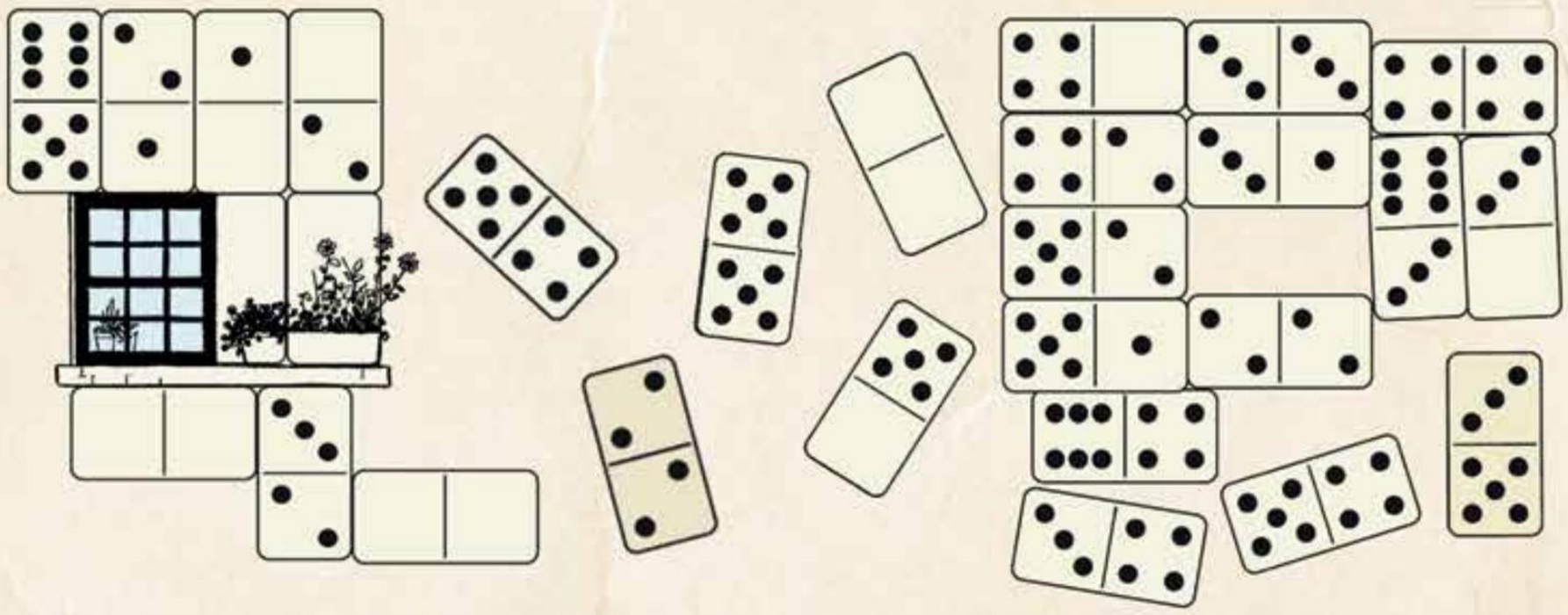

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George Clinton. COURTESY PHOTO

The Mothership is en route

George Clinton talks teaming up with Detroit Opera Orchestra

By Kahn Santori Davison

The funky, out-of-this-world music of George Clinton is headed to the Detroit Opera House.

The concert, titled "Symphonic PFunk: Celebrating The Music of Parliament Funkadelic," will feature Clinton's music performed for the first time by a full orchestra. Arranger Ray Chew will lead the Detroit Opera Orchestra featuring special guests Nona Hendryx, Vernon Reid, and Rahsaan Patterson.

Set for 8 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 31, the concert is a bit of a homecoming for Clinton as he's always considered Detroit his second home. Clinton, 84, was originally born in Kannapolis, North Carolina and moved to Detroit to pursue his music dreams.

"Back in the '60s, we were trying to get on Motown [Records]," he says via phone interview from a much warmer Florida. "We were working for Golden World Records, performing during the psychedelic era at Grande Ballroom, Olympia, 20 Grand, playing all those places where the group grew."

Clinton's time in Detroit was groundbreaking. With his groups Funkadelic and Parliament, he reimagined funk music sonically and aesthetically, mixing jazz, gospel, and pop into what he called P-Funk. Funkadelic's *Cosmic Slop* (1973) and Parliament's *Mothership Connection* (1975) and *The Clones of Dr. Funkenstein* (1976) are just a few of the albums that were recorded at Detroit's United Sound Systems studio.

Chew, an orchestral arranger who has been the music director of ABC's *Dancing with the Stars* since 2014, was tasked with orchestrating the selected songs from Clinton's massive catalog for the concert.

"When we sit and work on these orchestrations, it's going to be very consistent with what you know," says Chew. "I'm going back to the original recording and interacting with George and his bandmates. So we're going to make sure we've having the best of what's been done and what's being done now."

In the '70s, Clinton was ahead of his time as he transposed loud rock guitars, heavy amps, synths, and a very early version of the drum machine technique dubbed the "man in the box" into his own brand of funk. Clinton was chasing a sound that required unorthodox methods and ingenuity to create.

"The stuff we did was very unreal when we did it — the technologies, the feedback, and all of that was coming from some other place," Clinton says. "So interpreting that with notes, writing it down, and orchestrating it has to be a challenge to get those sounds. Ray did a great job on that."

There is also a timeless factor that has allowed Clinton's music to stay relevant for five decades. While Baby Boomers have grown up with him, Gen X through Gen Z have embraced his music through hip-hop, making Clinton one of the most sampled artists to date, appearing on tracks by Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Public Enemy, Tupac, De La Soul, and N.W.A., among others.

"You got kids and adults who are willing to listen to the music on their own terms," Clinton says. "It's like going to the circus — it's the only place that the grandparents, the parents, and the kids can go together and nobody feels like the other one is corny and they don't want to be there with you."

On May 16, the city of Detroit honored the late Amp Fiddler, one of Clinton's most popular bandmates, with a secondary street sign named after him in his Conant Gardens neighborhood. Fiddler had gone on to become a phenomenal artist in his own right before he died in 2023 at 65. Upon hearing of his passing Clinton left a heartfelt social media post and has fond memories of Fiddler.

"He was my boy," Clinton says. "Right when Lollapalooza came out, he joined the band. He brought a fresh style to us [...] he had his own jazz and classical styles that worked so well with us. He was just a big part of the band all the way through like that he played with us. I was so proud to have worked with him over the years."

This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the landing of the Mothership, a spaceship prop that appeared on stage for the first time during Parliament's show at the Municipal Auditorium in New Orleans in 1976. While there is an anniversary tour in the works, Clinton and Chew's current focus is making sure the Jan. 31 concert is a memorable night of music for Detroiters.

"We want them to come away knowing that the music that they are hearing is a worldwide relevant experience," Chew says, adding, "They're going to have an experience. George is going to take them on an interplanetary trip and free their minds so their butts will follow."

Clinton adds, "To be able to do this show in Detroit, I feel really proud. To do it like that in Detroit from where we started and 50 years later and still be reaching up heading off to a planet and still funking, that feels real good." MT

Starts at 8 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 31; Detroit Opera, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit; detroitopera.org. Tickets start at $63.

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Amelia Street Pizza Co. plans Hazel Park shop

A popular pizza pop-up is planning to open a brick-and-mortar location in metro Detroit.

Matt Arb's Amelia Street Pizza Co. — known for its signature "Pecorino Half Moon," with a sourdough crust dusted in shaved cheese — is aiming for a spring opening in Hazel Park.

Acclaimed chef James Rigato is backing the project, serving as investor and mentor.

"It's the coolest thing to have someone like James taking an interest in this little thing that started in my kitchen," Arb said. "He hasn't tried to change it or tell me what to do. Having him in my corner is just going to make it even more special. Our goal is to have the best pizza you've ever had, but for it to still feel like a neighborhood spot."

The low-frills shop will be located at 951 E. Nine Mile Rd., in a 1,000-square-foot storefront attached to a party store. It's located less than a mile away from Mabel Gray, the high-end restaurant Rigato has owned and operated for a decade.

"I've wanted to open a pizza spot for a long time," Rigato said. "But this is not a Mabel Gray project. This is Matt's business and Matt's pizza. My mentorship is on the business and behind-the-scenes side. It's about continuing to bring great food concepts to the city where I live and work, and helping a talented, independent guy who makes really great pizza build something from the ground up."

James Rigato and Matt Arb. MARK KURLYANDCHIK / BOOTH ONE CREATIVE

Arb launched his pop-up out of his home after seven years working as a refinancing banker at Rocket Mortgage. His pizzas took off on social media, catching the attention of Rigato and leading to a residency at Detroit's Dragonfly in 2025.

The menu is simple, featuring cheese, pepperoni, and a rotating special. Cheese bread, cookies, and soft drinks will round out the offerings.

More information is available on Instagram @ameliastpizzaco.

—Lee DeVito

Chick-fil-A opens first downtown Detroit store

Chick-fil-A is continuing its expansion into the Detroit area, opening its first downtown location.

The new store opened Thursday inside the First National Building at 660 Woodward Ave.

The chain says the restaurant will employ about 110 workers and celebrated the opening by making charitable donations to Detroit-based organizations, including $50,000 each to Gleaners Community Food Bank, Food Rescue US – Detroit, and the Detroit Public Schools Foundation to support the Breithaupt Career and Technical Center Culinary Program.

The downtown Detroit location is the latest of about 20 stores that have opened in the region in recent years, with Ann Arbor's first Chick-fil-A store opening its doors in December.

—Lee DeVito

Spanish-inspired Antidote opens East Village

Detroit entrepreneur Nya Marshall is expanding her dining ventures in East Village.

Her latest restaurant, the Spanish-inspired Antidote, celebrated its grand opening at 14628 E. Jefferson Ave.

"Rooted in Spanish culinary traditions and layered with global influence, the menu draws from Mediterranean technique while embracing a borderless approach to flavor," is how a press release describes Antidite. Menu items include dishes like mussels and chorizo, Catalan-style cod, and Basque cheesecake.

As far as the drinks go, Antidote touts wines and cocktails, including non-alcoholic options.

The restaurant will be open for brunch, dinner, and late-night, with private dining options available.

Antidote is located in the former Norma G's space, a Caribbean-inspired restaurant which closed in 2023. It's not far from where Marshall opened Ivy Kitchen and Cocktails in a long-abandoned building in 2020.

—Lee DeVito

Lola's Taco Bar launches in Grosse Pointe

A new dining destination is coming to Grosse Pointe.

Lola's Taco Bar announced its grand opening in a former Boston Market store at 20195 Mack Ave. in Grosse Pointe Woods.

The restaurant is led by Grosse Pointe native Branden McRill, who earned a Michelin star at his New York City restaurant Rebelle, and chef Brandon Zarb, who has worked at Chicago's Big Star and Ferndale's Imperial.

"Lola's is meant to be a place you come back to again and again," McRill said in a statement. "Great tacos, affordable margaritas, warm hospitality — that's what makes a neighborhood restaurant work."

Hospitality operator Mel Fuechtmann and growth strategist Niko Moschouris round out the team.

The fast-casual restaurant focuses on tacos, burritos, and bowls, with house-made salsas and margaritas on draft.

"We want to wow and amaze people with food that's thoughtful, vibrant, and accessible all at once," McRill added.

"The taco is the perfect vehicle for delivering big flavors to a wide audience," said Zarb. "We're being careful about respecting traditions while applying some culinary techniques to the freshest products available. We want you to find a taco that satisfies everyone at the table at Lola's, whether you're a taco purist, an adventurous eater, or even someone looking for some great vegan or healthy options."

A rotating "Good Taco" menu item will support local schools and nonprofits, with the first benefactor set to be Detroit's Rising Stars Academy. The nonprofit provides life skills and job training for young adults with developmental disabilities, and Lola's Taco Bar says it will also hire Rising Stars Academy workers for prep work.

"We wanted giving back to be something real, not symbolic," said Fuechtmann. "This partnership is about showing up for the community in a tangible way."

The space features a custom mural by Detroit artist Ivan Montoya and includes a patio set to open in the spring. It will employ around 25 workers, the restaurant says.

—Lee DeVito

If you're only into movies that help you relax, stay far the hell away from this one. A24

Film

A masterpiece you'll never want to watch again

By Jared Rasic, Last Word Pictures

Marty Supreme

Rated: R

Run-time: 150 minutes

I don't know what other people are after when they watch movies and television. Some people use pop culture to escape the narrow confines of their daily life and only want to be entertained. Others just want to unwind at the end of the day with their brain on low-power mode. More and more people (specifically in America) struggle with silence and need sound in the background while they fold laundry or doomscroll across the wasteland of Facebook.

Me? I don't care whether a film makes me feel good or bad as long as it makes me feel something. If a movie gives you nothing, not a chuckle, a tear, or even a dash of annoyance for how terrible it is, then the film has broken the unwritten contract we make with it: to use our precious time for something, even ephemerally, worthwhile. As much as I wasn't in love with the plot or dialogue of the new *Avatar*, I was still taken to a distant planet for three hours and given free rein to luxuriate in director James Cameron's imagination. Or on the contract-breaking end of the spectrum, the *Minecraft*movie made me feel like a slack-jawed consumer clapping at a chicken jockey.

There's a new school of filmmakers that take that contract with their audience seriously, but they don't want to give you feelings of awe or heartwarming affirmations. Instead, they come at you with anxious intensity, flop sweat, and the feeling of tightly clenched teeth holding back wave after wave of panic attacks. Ari Aster and his cinema of awkward injustice is a perfect example of this, but no other filmmakers have the uncanny ability to make me want to close my eyes and do breath work while practicing mindfulness more than Josh and Benny Safdie.

From the ticking clock intensity of *Good Time* to the relentless tension in the depths of the Diamond District in *Uncut Gems*, the Safdies obviously want you to leave the theater feeling some kind of way, but I think they're much more interested in crafting emotion in the moment and keeping their audience gripping their seats like they're in a plane without power. In 2025, the Safdies took a (hopefully short) break from one another's creative partnership, with Benny making The Rock's stab at awards recognition with the surprisingly gentle *The Smashing Machine*, while Josh crafted the insanely stressful epic, ping-pong odyssey *Marty Supreme*.

And I feel perfectly comfortable saying that *Marty Supreme* is a straight masterpiece with what is easily the finest performance from Timothée Chalamet's relatively new career. Do I ever want to sit through it again? No, but I will because I'm softly masochistic and obsessed with the technical wizardry on display. But, man, if you're only into movies that help you relax, stay far the hell away from this one.

Chalamet plays Marty Mauser, a deeply unpleasant table tennis prodigy who is so profoundly unhappy at his station in life that he will do anything, screw over anyone and lie, cheat, and steal his way into glory. *Marty Supreme* is his episodic journey into the heart of darkness where he comes into contact with glamorous, yet faded movie stars, teeth-gnashing gangsters, shotgun-toting farmers, the high stakes world of professional ping pong, and, just maybe, unconditional love.

You won't ever like Marty, but you'll be in awe of his depthless narcissism and quotidian restlessness. He moves through the world thinking he's the shark, but unconsciously terrified he might be the remora on its body. Marty cannot survive in still water and will ignite endless depth charges just to make sure the ocean is still there.

Thirty minutes into *Marty Supreme* I was in love with Josh Safdie's technical brilliance and the clarity of his grimy, 1950s vision. After an hour and a half, I was exhausted and had completely moved away from exhilaration into a numbed weariness. I didn't need another story of a horrible white guy burning down all he touches in his pursuit of some bastardized and quixotic delusion of the American dream. After 150 minutes and as the closing credits hit, I wasn't just back in love... I was swooning at the brilliance of Safdie, Chalamet, and every other brilliant mind involved in this generational work.

That's because Safdie is such an assured filmmaker that he knows the film is exhausting and that Marty is the absolute worst. He wants us to see the hollow promise of the American dream and be heartbroken for what could have been. Marty spends almost the entire film branding his own mythology, telling anyone who will listen about his fearless self-reliance and bootstrap determinism, while climbing on every pair of shoulders he can reach. This is the America of *Marty Supreme* and the hypocrisy of its promise.

Marty Supreme is about ping pong in the same way that *Apocalypse Now* is about war. Somehow, Josh Safdie has made a movie that doesn't just capture the highs and lows of a life, but the emotional undercurrents as well. You feel absolutely everything Marty is going through, while still mostly despising him. By the end, Safdie leaves it up to the audience to root for or against Mr. Mauser and his dream of ping pong dominance.

Whichever way you're inclined doesn't matter. What's important is that a movie made you question your moral compass and reevaluate your own self-mythologizing. That's a remarkable achievement even if it's something that most audiences don't want from art anymore. Just like Marty, the film dares to ask directly: "What is it that you want and what will you do to get it?" You don't need to answer out loud.

Grade: A MT

The dream of a green rush has morphed into a cutthroat industry in which most businesses are fighting to survive. STEVE NEAVLING

Michigan's cannabis market shrinks as new tax threatens more closures

By Steve Neavling

Michigan's cannabis industry is facing a sobering reckoning in 2026 that could have lasting ramifications for legal weed.

Since recreational cannabis sales began in December 2019, prices have plummeted, more than 550 dispensaries and cultivators have closed, and thousands of employees have been laid off.

And for the first time, the recreational market saw a decline in annual sales, according to new figures released by the Michigan Cannabis Regulatory Agency (CRA). Adult-use dispensaries rang up $3.17 billion in sales in 2025, down from $3.27 billion in 2024, a decline of about $100 million, or 3.1%.

Prior to 2025, year-over-year growth helped turn Michigan into one of the nation's largest legal cannabis markets. But beneath that growth was an industry struggling with declining prices from an oversaturated supply.

The dream of a green rush, it turns out, has given way to a cutthroat market where most businesses are fighting to survive.

During the six years of recreational sales, the industry has generated a remarkable $13.23 billion in purchases and $2.2 billion in state and excise taxes that go to local governments, schools, and roads.

But those figures are expected to continue falling this year.

Despite the mounting problems facing the industry, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and state lawmakers approved a measure late last year to impose a 24% wholesale tax on cannabis in 2026. Desperate to deliver on her aging pledge to "fix the damn roads," Whitmer teamed up with the state House to sneak in the tax proposal before the industry and consumers could respond.

Whitmer signed the bill in October, nearly two weeks after the Michigan Department of Treasury estimated the new tax will shrink the wholesale market by 14%, according to records obtained by *Metro Times*. In other words, the state anticipates that its wholesale tax will chase away customers and cause a significant decline in excise and sales tax revenue.

Meanwhile, legislators have not touched the 4% liquor tax since it was set in 1985. That may be because the liquor industry has one of the most powerful lobbies and has donated heavily to Whitmer and other lawmakers.

"They took advantage of a fledgling industry that isn't organized, and they did it without any public discussion and punched it through," Stuart Carter, who owns Detroit dispensary Utopia Gardens and a cultivation facility, tells *Metro Times*. "Now everyone is scrambling to figure out what to do."

Carter and other business owners say the new tax will deepen the downturn, forcing more dispensaries, processors, and cultivators to close and giving an upper hand to the larger corporate retailers and grow operations that provide mediocre product.

"The multi-chain operators are in the best position to weather this because they are buying in bulk and they can diffuse losses at some of their stores," Carter says. "It's the smaller entrepreneurs who are going to be the most affected."

Tom Farrell, owner of the Refinery dispensaries in New Buffalo and Kalamazoo and Growing Pains, a cultivator, says the tax is already taking a toll on the industry. He says sales at his New Buffalo dispensary "have been very, very slow," in part because many consumers mistakenly believe they are responsible for paying the 24% wholesale tax beginning on Jan. 1.

"It's slower than it has ever been," Farrell says, adding that the same store saw record sales in December.

Dispensaries stocked up on a lot of weed in December to avoid the tax's impact. While growers and processors are legally responsible for paying the tax, their options for recouping at least a portion of the extra costs are limited to raising prices or negotiating with dispensaries to absorb some of the increase. In an industry already hanging on by razor-thin margins, those costs are likely to raise prices for consumers, many of whom are already squeezed by inflation and other rising prices.

"There isn't that much action in early 2026," Brian Farah, CEO of Hello Farms in Au Gres Township, says. "Everyone bought up in anticipation of the tax."

Farah isn't optimistic about this year, saying "2026 is set to be even worse than 2025."

He adds, "We always look out for the Michigan consumer by offering a quality product, but it's becoming more and more challenging because sales numbers are starting to decline."

Even before the wholesale tax, the industry has been struggling. Prices are a major factor. The average retail price for an ounce of recreational flower fell to $58.20 in December 2025, down from $69.20 a year earlier, and $95.08 in December 2023, according to CRA data. The state has become one of the cheapest legal cannabis markets in the country, which is a win for consumers, but it's a tough reality for businesses trying to stay afloat.

By the end of 2025, Michigan had 2,171 active cannabis licenses, down 85 from the prior year, marking the first year-over-year decline in active licenses since adult-use began. The CRA's licensing records show 940 licenses are no longer active.

Growers are feeling the pressure the most. Michigan currently has 430 active grow operations, but 191 have closed since the industry began. That means about 30.8% of growers have gone out of business over the past six years.

In Detroit, at least 14 cannabis businesses have closed since the city began issuing licenses in late 2022.

A vacant dispensary in Hamtramck. STEVE NEAVLING

Even with the closures, the market is still crowded. New growers and processors continue to enter the industry nearly as fast as those leaving it. Cannabis operators say oversupply is going to continue to eat away at the industry this year.

"There is way too much supply. There's too much product," Farrell says.

As an example of how bad it has gotten, Farrell points to one brand that is making just a 25-cent profit off of a vape cartridge.

Whitmer's office no longer responds to *Metro Times*'s questions about the cannabis industry.

CRA spokesman David Harns says changes in a new industry are normal and are similar to the challenges facing other cannabis markets.

"Since legalization, Michigan's cannabis industry has experienced significant growth, making the state one of the top producers in the country," Harns says. "As the market continues to mature, fluctuations in supply and demand are expected and consistent with patterns seen in other states that legalized earlier."

After voting in favor of the wholesale tax, the state Senate introduced a set of bills on Oct. 2 that would limit competition in hopes of reducing the oversupply.

Senate Bill 597, introduced by Sens. Sam Singh, D-East Lansing, and Jeremy Moss, D-Southfield, would limit each municipality to one dispensary for every 10,000 residents. If approved, the legislation would prevent the CRA from approving new dispensary licenses in municipalities that already exceed the limit. Municipalities with fewer than 10,000 residents would be limited to one retail license.

While many in the industry support the legislation, it threatens smaller cities like Hazel Park (pop. 19,431), Ferndale (pop. 19,431), and Inkster (pop. 25,108), which have become cannabis hubs and rely on the tax revenue. Hazel Park has nine dispensaries, Ferndale has six, and Inkster has seven, according to CRA records. The new legislation would limit Hazel Park and Ferndale to one dispensary each and Inkster to two.

The legislation wouldn't force existing dispensaries to close, but once one shuts down, it can't be replaced until the number of retailers fall below the proposed cap.

For cannabis workers, this is a nerve-racking year. Michigan's regulated cannabis industry remains a major employer, with 41,248 workers counted in December 2025. Those jobs include dispensary employees, cultivation and processing staff, delivery drivers, compliance specialists, security teams, and others.

"People are really scared," Farrell says. "I have employees asking me if they are going to still have a job."

Municipal budgets are also at risk. Michigan shares adult-use cannabis excise tax revenue with communities that allow dispensaries and other cannabis marijuana businesses to operate, and the payments have become an important revenue stream in those cash-strapped cities and townships. In fiscal year 2024, Michigan distributed nearly $100 million to communities, with each eligible municipality, county, and tribe receiving more than $58,200 per licensed retail store and microbusiness within its borders.

If more retailers shut down and sales weaken, local distributions will shrink. "The state is going to lose excise and sales taxes because of the wholesale tax," Stewart says.

As frustration grows over the legal industry, business owners are worried more consumers will go back to an illicit market that doesn't face steep tax rates. If that happens, operators say, the legal market will continue to shrink, and the state will have less revenue in the future.

For now, dispensaries, growers, processors, and other cannabis businesses will have to find a way to adapt, and it won't be easy. "We want to have a sustainable Michigan business that gives back to the customers," Farah says. "But with these changes, it will be difficult to navigate these waters." MT

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Savage Love

Cis Fret

By Dan Savage

Q: *I am a 45-year-old femme-presenting genderqueer AFAB person. When I have romantic relationship with cis het men, I've noticed two general types: They either enjoy sex and prioritize pleasure and making things fun for their partners and themselves, but make no special big deal about it, and we usually have frequent enough sex and that's enjoyable and good. Or the sex starts out pretty good but — at some point — they make it known to me that they need to have sex regularly, that they can't tolerate a lack of sex, that they get grumpy if they don't have sex, that they've been in sexless relationships before — blah blah blah — and soon the relationship starts to revolve around how much sex we're having. Usually around this time the sex either gets worse or I realize that it wasn't that good to begin with and then we start having less sex and then it slowly becomes so terrible that I barely want to have sex with them anymore at all and then the relationship ends. I wonder if anyone else has had this experience, and if you have any comments.*

—Help Explain This Male Entitlement Nonsense

A: You've noticed a pattern: While not all cis het men suck — sounds like you've found and fucked a few good ones — cis het men who tell you they need to have sex regularly, that they can't tolerate a lack of sex, and that they barely survived their last sexless relationships... those cis het guys tend to suck. In your experience, sex with cis het men who make speeches about how much sex they feel entitled to quickly becomes an obligation, not a pleasure.

So, you've collected the data and you've identified a pattern — you've identified a literal and figurative tell — and with that data set in hand, HETMEN, you can make more informed choices going forward. If a cis het man is good sex and doesn't suddenly launch into a speech about not being able to tolerate a lack of sex, you can continue fucking that cis het man. If a cis het man is good sex but suddenly makes a speech about how much sex he needs to have, you shouldn't continue to fuck that cis het man because the sex isn't going to stay good for long. Unless having your priors confirmed is your biggest kink, HETMEN, you shouldn't keep fucking guys who make that speech until the sex is terrible. Get out while the fucking is good.

Zooming out for a second: As tempting as it is to shrug and say, "Oh, yeah, some cis het men sure do suck," which I think is what you expected me to say, I'm gonna be a contrary little cis homo and say this instead: While some of everybody sucks — some cis het men, some cis homos suck, some femme-presenting genderqueer AFAB persons, etc. — it's not unreasonable for a person to talk about their sexual expectations, fantasies, desires, hopes, and prayers during the discovery phase of a relationship. If you're fucking around in the hopes of finding a partner, HETMEN, you're auditioning someone to play that part for you and they're auditioning you to play that part for them. And I think it's good when both parties are honest and upfront about the kinds of sex they wanna have and how much sex they ideally like to have. That goes double or triple or sextuple to the tenth power if a relationship is sexually exclusive or you hope to become sexually exclusive.

So, and for the record, I don't think there's anything inherently problematic about a cis het dude — or any other type of person for that matter (cis homo, trans lezbo, ace acrobat, etc.) — spelling out their needs and expectations early in a relationship. So long as someone is just as interested in hearing about their partners' needs, wants, and expectations, so long as it's a dialogue and not a monologue, and so long as someone is realistic about how everyday life sometimes disrupts regularly scheduled fucking, two people making their needs known to each other is a good thing. It's certainly better than hoping your new partner can somehow read your mind.

And for the record: life is long, every couple goes through dry spells, and no one is entitled to a certain amount of sex. Both partners — or all partners — should make a good faith effort to meet each other's reasonable sexual needs, HETMEN, both should be willing to make reasonable accommodations when they can't meet each other's needs, and both should be down to have a little maintenance sex once in a while. And just like everybody gets to have limits and preferences, everyone gets to have — and everyone is allowed to share — their reasonable sexual expectations.

JOE NEWTON

Zooming out some more: If you're queer as in not heterosexual and not just queer as in asymmetrical haircut, HETMEN, your dating pool is vast. You don't have to settle for cis het men if you've had more bad experiences with cis het men than good ones. You can date and/or fuck cis women, bi women, trans women, trans guys, bi guys, AFAB enbies, AMAB enbies, pansexuals, omnisexuals, etc., etc., etc. You don't have to keep eating your least favorite Skittle. Taste the rainbow.

And my final comment...

For all I know, you've dated tons of people who weren't cis and straight and male and het. But on the off chance you haven't, here's what you're likely to find out when you start dating other kinds of people: lots of people suck and all different kinds of people suck. While some would argue that cis het men suck at higher rates, your positive experiences with cis het men demonstrate that #NotAllCisHetMen suck. As a queer person myself, HETMEN, it saddens me to report that a significant percentage of the queers you're going to fuck are also going suck. Queers might suck in slightly different ways — our tells might be different — but my advice remains the same: don't waste your time on people who suck, regardless of their sexual orientations, their gender identities, or their hairstyles.

Q: *I am a cis het 40-year-old woman. I'm not a virgin, but I also haven't had a ton of partners. I had sex with a man I like for the first time. This new partner — also cis and supposedly het — asked me to put my finger in his anus, something no straight man has ever asked me to do before. I listen to your show, Dan, so I understand that this can be very pleasurable. He asked for my consent, and I granted it. My friends are all very judgmental and say he has to be bisexual and that no straight man would ever be up for being on the receiving end of butt play. For the most part, I don't care what they think, but I like this man and do not want to get attached if he has needs I can't meet as a cis female. My questions are...*

1. Is this a common thing for straight men to ask for?

2. How do I do it properly so as not to hurt him?

I really hope to hear back from you, Dan, because everyone else I know will tell me (or has told me) he is gay. I feel like I know you and I want to hear what you think before I proceed.

—Really Into New Guy

A: 1. It depends on how you define "common." Is this something most straight men ask for? No, it's not. But there are enough straight guys out there who like to be fingered that I feel confident saying that the ask isn't uncommon. It's impossible to put a number to it, but I'd guess that tens of thousands of American men asked their female partners to finger them over the last week. Some used their words, some men used body language, but they asked.

Now, this guy *could* be gay — anybody could be gay — but wanting a finger in his ass isn't proof this guy wants to get dicked down. Not even wanting to be dicked down is proof a guy is gay these days, RING, as some straight guys are into pegging, some straight guys are extremely heteroflexible, and some straight guys like to bottom for trans women. Brave new world, such people in it, etc.

And asking you, a straight woman, to put your finger in his ass is solid evidence this new partner of yours most likely isn't gay. (The reaction of your friends, on the other hand, is proof they're misinformed and homophobic.) While some deeply closeted gay men will have sex with women, RING, deeply closeted gay men are too insecure about

seeming gay to ask the women they're fucking to do shit that might seem gay. A closeted gay dude who didn't want his new girlfriend to suspect he might be gay is less likely to ask to be fingered, plugged, or pegged than a straight guy who's A. secure in his sexuality and B. not afraid of his own butt.

As for your friends...

You're allowed to confide in a close friend or two about a new partner's surprising sexual request. That's fair. But it sounds like you asked *all* your friends about this — it sounds like you launched a thousand group chats — which isn't fair. Confiding in a trusted friend is understandable and sometimes necessary for our physical and emotional safety, but to broadcast a new partner's sexual interests to all of your friends — including friends he'll presumably meet if you two wind up dating — is to violate his privacy. I don't think you should apologize to him, RING, as he doesn't need to know that all of your friends think he's gay because he likes being fingered, but you should cap the number of friends you confide in going forward. One or two besties, RING, not the whole fucking sorority.

2. Here's how it's done: trim your nails, use plenty of lube, prep his hole before you penetrate him (massage and circle the outer ring with your lubed up finger before plunging in), and keep asking him if it feels good. If you find out you enjoy penetrating a man, Yahtzee! If you decide it's not for you — if finger fucking a man is a turn-off (of if finger fucking *this* man is a turn-off) — you don't have to do it and/or him again.

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

Q: *We're a married cisgender straight couple. We are both in our thirties and we live in a little town in Italy with our five-year-old daughter. We both had only monogamous relationships in the past, but with our previous partners we never experienced the same level of comfort we have between us. We talk a lot about our sexual relationship and in the past year or so we have been talking about — and fantasizing about — sharing ourselves with another couple. This is something neither of us dared to mention to our previous partners. We both want to see each other having sex with other people and we both want to experiment with homosexual activity during a threesome or a foursome. The problem is: we don't know where to start. We never used online dating, nor do we know about places we can meet similarly interested couples. We have heard that pineapples are signs that identify couples that seek other couples. But if we see a pineapple in couple's house, how do we make sure it's not an accidental pineapple? We are worried we may get it wrong. Can you give us some advice for total beginners?*

—Couple Urgently Requires Intensely Orgiastic Unrestricted Sex

A: I googled this for you and found plenty of swingers' clubs and sex-positive organizations in Italy. I'm not going to name any of them, CURIOUS, because I can't do site visits and therefore can't vouch for the crowd, décor, or vibes. But clubs for straight swingers exist in Italy, and they're not exactly underground. They don't exist in the small town where you live, most likely, but your child is old enough to spend a weekend with the grandparents while you and your wife spend the weekend "visiting museums" in Rome or Milan.

Quick digression: Straight Italians who wanna have crazy and consensual sexual adventures are not being targeted by Giorgia Meloni's rightwing populist government. It's queer Italians whose lives are being demagogued about and whose rights are being rolled back under the banner of "family values." Meanwhile, straight people — including Giorgia Meloni — are free to do/screw whatever the fuck they want.

Back to your question, CURIOUS: Straight swingers once used pineapples as a sign — swingers displayed pineapples in their homes to let other swinging couples know they were swingers too — in the same way gay men once used hankies to signal their sexual interests to other gay men. But now we have the internet, CURIOUS, so swinging couples no longer have to rely on a symbol that might be misconstrued — sometimes a pineapple is just a pineapple — and gay men don't have to rely on hankies that no one could actually see in the dim light of a gay bar. Swinging straight couples go to parties and get on hookup apps these days, and gay men list their sexual interests on Grindr, Sniffies, Scruff, Recon, etc.

So, don't risk an accidental pineapple. Get online and start googling, CURIOUS, look for clubs and parties in an Italian city near you. But just as decent Americans don't fuck with Republicans, you and the wife shouldn't fuck with Brothers of Italy. MT

Got problems? Yes, you do! Email your question for the column to mailbox@savage.love!

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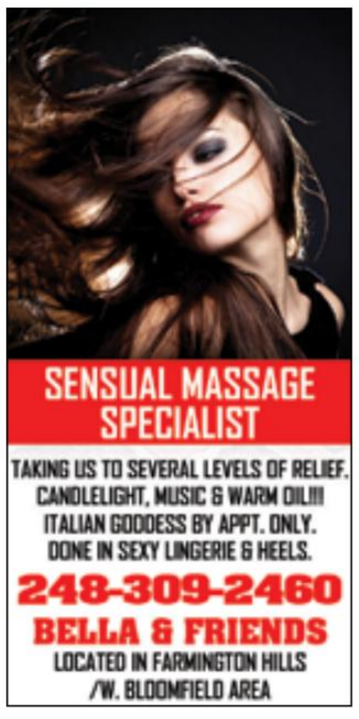
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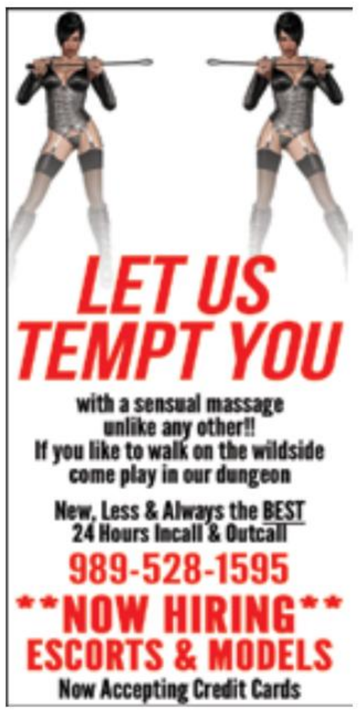
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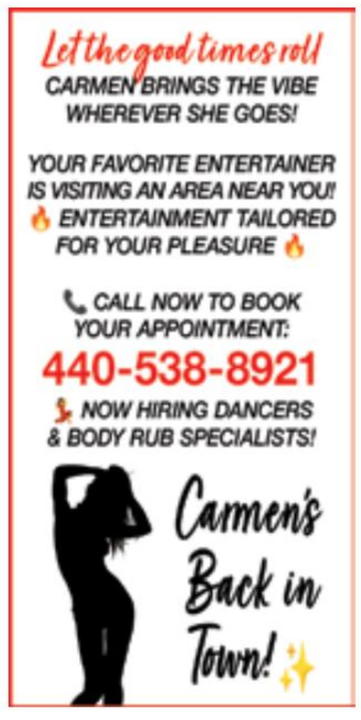
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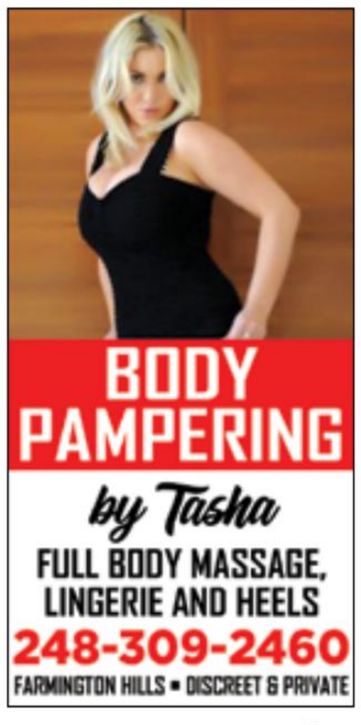
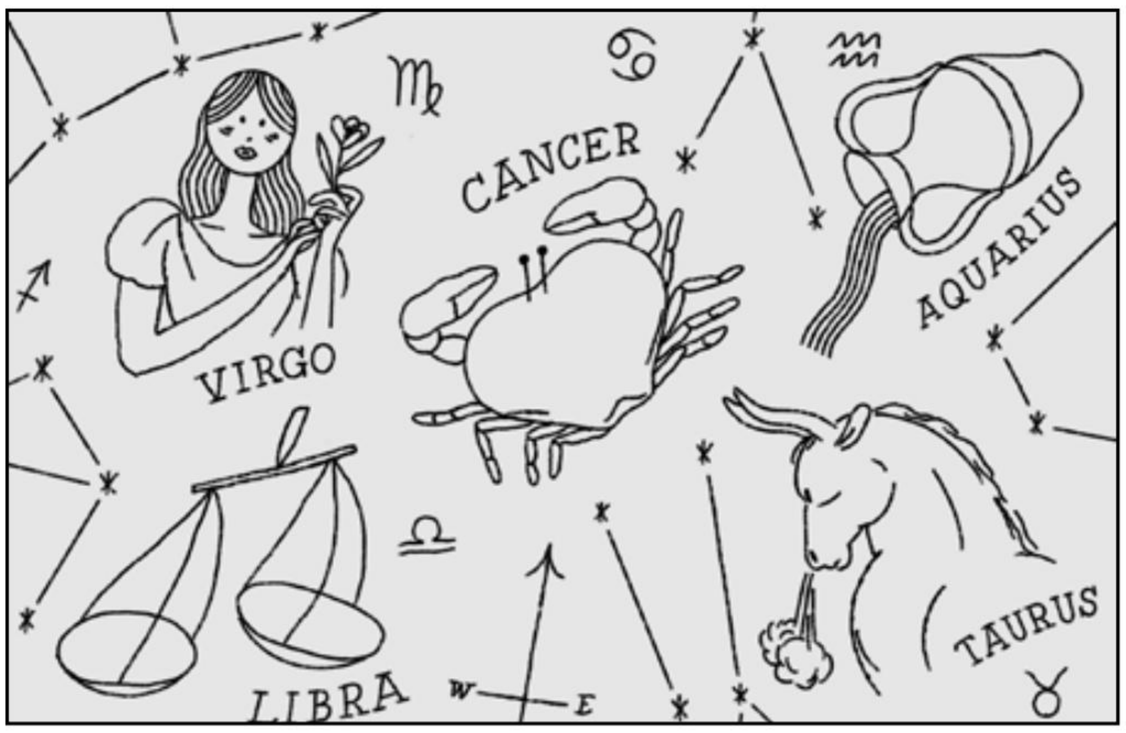


Free Will Astrology

By Rob Brezsny



JAMES NOELLERT

ARIES: March 21 – April 19
Master astrologer Steven Forrest understands you Aries people well. He says that the riskiest strategy you can pursue is to constantly seek safety. It's crucial for you to always be on the lookout for adventure. One of your chief assignments is to cultivate courage—especially the kind of brave boldness that arises as you explore unknown territory. To rouse the magic that really matters, you must face your fears regularly. The coming months will be an ideal time for you to dive in and celebrate this approach to life.

TAURUS: April 20 – May 20
You are an ambassador from the material world to the realm of spirit—and vice versa. One of your prime assignments is the opposite of what the transcendence-obsessed gurus preach. You're here to prove that the flesh is holy, pleasure is a form of prayer, and the senses are portals to the divine. When you revel in earthy delights, when you luxuriate in rich textures and tastes and scents, you're not being "attached" or "unspiritual." You're enacting a radical sacred stance. Being exuberantly immersed in the material world isn't a mistake to overcome but a blessing to savor. May you redouble your subversive work of treating your body as a cathedral and sensual enjoyments as sacraments.

GEMINI: May 21 – June 20
Everything that's meant for you is trying to find its way to you. Here's the problem: It can't deliver the goods if you're in constant motion. The boons trying to reach you are circling, waiting for a stable landing spot. If you keep up the restless roaming, life might have to slow you down, even stop you, so you'll be still enough to embody receptivity. Don't wait for that. Pause now. Set aside whatever's feeding your restlessness and tune into the quiet signal of your own center. The moment you do, bounties will start arriving.

CANCER: June 21 – July 22
Artist Louise Bourgeois said, "I am what I do with my hands." I will adapt this declaration for your use, Cancerian: You are what you do with your feelings. You are the structures, sanctuaries, and nourishment you create from the raw material of your sensitivity. It's one of your superpowers! I understand that some people mistake emotional depth for passive vulnerability. They assume that feeling everything means doing nothing. But you prove that bias wrong. You are potentially a master builder. You can convert the flood waters of emotion into resources that hold, protect, and feed. I hope you will do this lavishly in the coming weeks.

LEO: July 23 – August 22
Admiring writers often say that the Balinese people have no traditional word for "art." Making things beautiful is woven into everyday life, as if everything should be done as beautifully as possible. I aspire to carry out this approach myself: infusing ordinary actions with the same care I'd bring to writing a story or song. Washing dishes, answering emails, and walking to the store: All are eligible for beauty treatment. I highly recommend this practice to you in the coming weeks, Leo. It's true that you're renowned for your dramatic gestures, but I believe you also have an underutilized talent for teasing out glory from mundane situations. Please do that a lot in the coming weeks. For starters, make your grocery list a poem.

VIRGO: August 23 – Sept. 22
Some American Indigenous cultures have "potlatch" ceremonies. These are elaborate gift-giving rituals where hosts gain prestige by generously and freely bestowing their riches on others. Circulating wealth, instead of hoarding it, is honored and celebrated. Is that economically irrational? Only if you believe that the point of resources is individual accumulation rather than community vitality. Potlatch operates on a different logic: The purpose of having stuff is to make having stuff possible for others. I invite you to make that your specialty in the coming months. Assume that your own thriving depends on the flourishing of those around you.

LIBRA: Sept. 23 – Oct. 22
Sufi poet Rumi wrote about a "treasure in ruins." He meant that what we're searching for may be hidden in places where we would rather not look. Your life isn't in ruins, Libra, but I suspect you may have been exploring exciting locations while shunning mundane ones that actually hold your answers. What do you think? Is that possible? Just for fun, investigate the neglected, ignored, and boring places. Try out the hypothesis that a golden discovery awaits you in some unfinished business or a situation you feel an aversion to.

SCORPIO: Oct. 23 – Nov. 21:
Your capacity for intensity is your superpower. I love it, I celebrate it, and I hope to keep nurturing it in you for as long as we're both here. But not everything deserves the full force of your passionate engagement. Some things are meant to be touched lightly, held loosely, and released easily. The question isn't whether to feel deeply—that's who you authentically are—but whether to act on every deep feeling as if it were sacred revelation. Some emotions are weather patterns passing through, not permanent truths requiring upheaval. These are especially key understandings for you to act on during the coming days.

SAGITTARIUS: Nov. 22 – Dec. 21
As I have promised you a million times, I will NEVER exaggerate. And though you may wonder if the statements I'm about to make are excessive and overblown, I assure you they are not. The fact is, dear Sagittarius, that everything you have always wanted to enhance and upgrade about togetherness is now possible to accomplish, and will continue to be for months to come. If you dare to dismantle your outmoded beliefs about love and deep friendship—every comforting myth, every conditioned response, every inherited instinct—you will discover new dimensions of intimacy that could inspire you forever.

CAPRICORN: Dec. 22 – Jan. 19
In Renaissance painting, *chiaroscuro* refers to the use of strong contrasts between light and dark. It's a technique that enhances the sense of depth. I believe your life may be in an intense chiaroscuro phase. As your joys grow bright, your doubts appear darker. As your understanding deepens, your perplexity mounts. Is this a problem? I prefer to understand it as an opportunity. For best results, study it closely. Maybe your anxiety is showing you what you care about. Perhaps your sadness is a sign of your growing emotional power. So find a way to benefit from the contrasts, dear Capricorn. Let shadows teach you how to fully appreciate the illumination.

AQUARIUS: Jan. 20 – Feb. 18
You are a spy from the future. Thank you for your service! I love to see your boldness as you smuggle innovative ideas into a present that may or may not be ready for them. Your feelings of alienation are sometimes uncomfortable, but they are crucial to the treasure you offer us. You see patterns others miss because you refuse to be hypnotized by consensus reality. Keep up the excellent work, please. May you honor your need to tinker with impossibilities and imagine alternatives to what everyone else imagines is inevitable. You are proof that we don't have to accept inherited structures as inevitable.

PISCES: Feb.19 – March 20
Your unconscious mind is extra communicative, dear Pisces. Hooray! Take advantage! Pay attention to weird images in dreams and songs that linger in your head. Be alert for seemingly random thoughts as they surface. Bypassing logic, your deep psyche is trying to show you ripe secrets and provocative hints. Your duty is to be receptive. So keep a journal or recording device by your bed. Notice which memories rise up out of nowhere. Be grateful for striking coincidences. These are invitations to tune in to meaningful feelings and truths you've been missing.

Homework: *Give yourself the biggest compliment you can dream up..* MT

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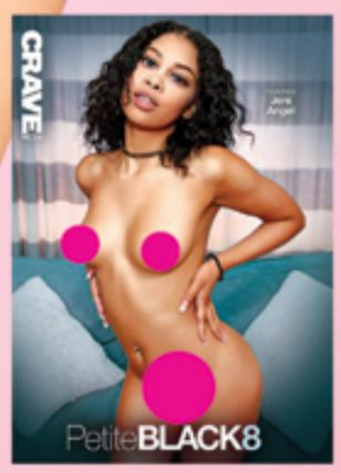

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